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# STUDIES IN ISLAMIC POETRY

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# STUDIES
# IN
# ISLAMIC POETRY

BY

REYNOLD ALLEYNE NICHOLSON
LITT.D., LL.D.
LECTURER IN PERSIAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
FORMERLY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE

CAMBRIDGE
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1921

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TO

EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWNE

WHOSE TEACHING AND EXAMPLE FIRST
INSPIRED ME TO PURSUE THE STUDY OF
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# PREFACE

WRITTEN during the war, these Studies grew out of the wish to impart some things I have enjoyed in Arabic and Persian not only to fellow-students, who can correct me if I misinterpret, but also to others who without being specialists are interested in the literature, philosophy and religion of the East. Since the five essays fall into two distinct groups, it has been decided to publish them in two volumes bearing different titles, namely, *Studies in Islamic Poetry* and *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. The latter comprise (1) an account of the famous Persian Ṣúfí, Abú Sa'íd ibn Abi 'l-Khayr—dervish, abbot, saint, and reputed poet—drawn from documents singularly rich in detail which shed a rather disillusioning light upon his character; (2) a study of 'Abdu 'l-Karím al-Jílí's treatise entitled *al-Insán al-Kámil* or "The Perfect Man," a very curious exposition of the Mohammedan Logos doctrine by a Muḥyawí, *i.e.* one whose modes of thought are derived from Muḥyi'ddín Ibnu 'l-'Arabí; (3) an essay on the Odes of Ibnu 'l-Fáriḍ, which unite mysticism with poetry of the rarest kind, but are so veiled in allegory that a glimpse of the meaning underneath is sometimes as much as we can obtain.

The present volume is devoted to belles-lettres. Professor Browne's edition of the *Lubábu 'l-Albáb*, the anthology compiled by Muḥammad 'Awfí, gave me an opportunity of trying what could be done with Persian court-poetry. In this field all the flowers are not roses, and the roses are artificial; yet with no disparagement to their beauty, so exquisite is the art. Abu 'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí was an old friend, whose pessimism made hours of gloom seem cheerful by contrast; and I believed that many would appreciate a version of selected

passages from his *Luzúmiyyát*. English readers have not yet had this work put before them in a recognisable form: they will see that it is not in the least like the "quatrains" which it has inspired. My essay should be read as a supplement to the monograph by Alfred von Kremer in the Proceedings of the Vienna Academy (1889). That, indeed, is worthy of its theme, and one can scarcely imagine that it will ever become obsolete. But with all its brilliancy and charm I doubt whether it does justice to Ma'arrí's genius. Von Kremer seems to have forgotten that poetry is not philosophy and that the *Luzúm* is pre-eminently the work of a literary man. His attention was fixed upon the ideas, consequently he did not examine the language and style with sufficient closeness to detect the subtle manner in which the poet at once disguises and proclaims his unbelief in the Mohammedan or any other revealed religion. I have broken new ground and endeavoured to widen the perspective. However my conclusions may be regarded, they are based on the best evidence, that of the author's writings, though it is avowedly disingenuous. Of the examples in English, including four which Mr Fisher Unwin has given me leave to reprint from my *Literary History of the Arabs* (1907), comparatively few coincide with the pieces chosen by Von Kremer. The appendix containing their text will serve, I hope, as an introduction to Arabic poetry for students who may find the pre-Islamic odes too difficult at first or fail to acquire a taste for them. Concerning the principles and methods which I have followed in translating, the choice of metres, the value of rhyme, etc., a good deal might be said; but as argument about such questions is apt to end in the sort of agreement recommended by Evenus—

σοὶ μὲν ταῦτα δοκοῦντ' ἔστω, ἐμοὶ δὲ τάδε—

it will be enough to say that the verse-translations are not unduly free and should be of use to readers of the original Arabic and Persian. While the mystical poems often need a

commentary, in other cases the aim has been to select typical extracts which for the most part explain themselves.

I cannot send forth this book without some reference to what has helped me to write it. Thirty years have now passed since I began to read Persian with Professor E. G. Browne. Looking back over that period, I recall his constant sympathy, his ever ready encouragement and support, with feelings which are beyond my power to express. By dedicating these Studies to him I would pay tribute to a great Orientalist and more especially acknowledge, in a way that will not displease him, my personal debt of gratitude and affection.

REYNOLD A. NICHOLSON.

*October*, 1920.

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# CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

P. 7. The name Abú Zurá'a is doubtful. See Ethé, *Neupersische Litteratur* in *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, vol. II. p. 221.

P. 10. I have retained the usual spelling of the name Rúdagí, but Rúdakí seems to be the correct form, as it rhymes with *kúdakí* in a verse by Niẓámí 'Arúḍí (*Lubáb*, vol. II. p. 7, l. 17) and with *andakí* in a verse by Kháqání (Jámí, *Baháristán*, ed. by Schlechta-Wssehrd, p. 95, l. 8 foll.).

P. 13. The flower which the Persians call *lála* (rendered here and elsewhere by "tulip") is really the red anemone.

P. 19. Jabal in connexion with 'Abdu 'l-Wási' refers to the mountainous district of Gharjistán. See Prof. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, vol. II. p. 341, and Mr Le Strange's *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 415–6.

P. 56, l. 8 from foot. It ought perhaps to have been mentioned that here the Latin imitation is not quite exact. In the catalectic variety of the *Ṭawíl* metre the third foot of the second hemistich is regularly ⏑ – ⏑, and ⏑ – – occurs only as a rare exception to the rule. For this reason the "free" (*muṭlaq*) rhyme should be restored in the poem by Farazdaq printed in Nöldeke's *Delectus*, pp. 84–6. Perfect metrical correspondence might be obtained by writing in the second line of the Latin version

habet testimonium hoc: grauis uia leti est,

and in the fourth line

priusquam uaces spe gloriaque potitus.

P. 67, No. 24. A comma should be substituted for the full stop at the end of the sixth line.

P. 82, No. 62, first line. *Read*

"The Imám, he knows—his tenets are not mine—"

P. 85, No. 72, first line. *Read* "to his sway."

P. 89, note 1. For *ḍáḍ* read *ḍád*.

P. 104, note 4. For *al-Farq bayna 'l-firaq* read "Abú Manṣúr 'Abdu 'l-Qáhir al-Baghdádí, *al-Farq bayna 'l-firaq*."

P. 115, No. 140, ll. 1–4. These lines evidently allude to an apocryphal Ḥadíth, but I do not remember to have met with it in any work on Ṣúfí asceticism.

P. 116, No. 141, last line. Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, ed. De Goeje in *Bibl. Geographorum Arabicorum*, II. 117: وبها (حِمْص) بيعة بعضها المسجد الجامع وشطرها للنصارى فيه هيكلهم ومذبحهم وبيعتهم من اعظم بيع الشام. According to Muqaddasí, the Moslems turned half of the church into a mosque when they conquered Ḥimṣ. Dr T. W. Arnold has called my

attention to a passage in Ibn Jubayr (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, vol. v. p. 303, 13–20) from which it appears that after mosques had been converted into churches, Moslems might continue to use a part of them. But these are doubtful examples of a practice which, in any case, was exceptional. Probably Ma'arrí is thinking of separate but adjacent buildings.

P. 157, penult. Ḥamdulláh Mustawfí, *Ta'ríkh-i Guzída* (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series. vol. XIV. p. 10, l. 7 foll.), refers to the doctrine which he says is held by the learned men of India, China, Cathay and Europe, that the creation of Adam took place a million years ago, and that there were several Adams, each speaking a different language, who succeeded one another in turn as the posterity of each died out. Cf. Bírúní, *al-Áthár u 'l-báqiya* tr. by Sachau under the title of *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (London, 1879), pp. 115–6.

P. 164, No. 238, first line. *Read*

"No books polemical had been composed."

P. 204, No. 327, third verse. *For* "Girls are arrows" *read*

"They are poisons."

P. 214, No. 24, v. ٩. Though all the texts, I think, have خبرتها, the true reading must be حَبَّرْتها, equivalent to كَتَبْتها.

P. 219, No. 39, v. ٤. *For* سُحْب *read* سُحْبِ.

P. 263, No. 219, v. ٢. *For* النَّخْلُ *read* والنَّخْلُ.

P. 264, No. 224, v. ٤. *For* ويَذْبَلْ *read* ويَذْبُلْ.

P. 272, No. 253, v. ١. *For* مدبِّر *read* مُدَبِّر.

# CHAPTER I

## AN EARLY PERSIAN ANTHOLOGY

THE BOOK entitled *Lubábu 'l-Albáb* has been known to students of Persian literature since 1848, when an account of the Elliot Codex was communicated to the Royal Asiatic Society by Nathaniel Bland[1]. Its importance and rarity—only two, or at most three, manuscripts have survived—marked it out for publication as soon as the long-delayed task of providing critical editions of historical and biographical Persian texts was taken in hand by Professor Browne with the energy and ardour to which Oriental scholarship owes so much; and it is now accessible in two volumes, admirably edited and artistically printed (Leyden, 1903–1906). Concerning the author, Muḥammad 'Awfí, we have little information. His family claimed descent from 'Abdu 'l-Raḥmán ibn 'Awf, an illustrious Companion of the Prophet. Born and bred at Bukhárá in the latter half of the twelfth century, 'Awfí became one of those wandering scholars who, obeying the Prophet's injunction to seek knowledge even in China, travelled from town to town and from court to court, and with nothing but their talents to recommend them played an influential part in Moslem politics and society. When Transoxania and Khurásán were threatened by the Mongols, he made his way to India, where he served in succession under Sultan Náṣiru'ddín Qubácha of Sind and his conqueror, Sultan Iltatmish. To the vizier of Iltatmish he dedicated his most famous work, the *Jawámi'u 'l-Ḥikáyát*, an immense collection of historical and literary anecdotes.

The *Lubáb* professes to be the first Biography of Persian Poets, but although its form and arrangement justify this

[1] See his article "On the earliest Persian Biography of Poets, by Muhammad Aufi, and on some other Works of the class called Tazkirat-ul-Shuara," in the ninth volume of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 111–176.

description, the so-called biographies chiefly consist of high-flown complimentary phrases strung together indiscriminately, with as little regard for fitness as for truth. Dates are very rare. In many cases the poet's name is the single fact that his "Life" yields, and we have reason to be thankful that the Moslem system of nomenclature often indicates the town or district to which a man belongs either by birth or residence. The *Lubáb* might safely be ignored if its value depended on the biographical notices written by 'Awfí himself. These, however, occupy an inconsiderable amount of space in relation to the whole text, which is almost entirely composed of excerpts from the work of about 300 poets. Essentially, then, the *Lubáb* is an anthology. It possesses unique historical importance as the oldest compilation of the kind in Persian[1], preserving the names of many ancient poets who are otherwise unknown, together with a great deal of verse that is nowhere else to be found. Of its literary merit lovers of poetry can form some notion from the specimens which I have translated, though this test is, of course, inadequate and must be corrected by reading the original passages as well as by reference to other portions of the book. Oriental standards of taste are so deeply at variance with those which prevail in Europe that we are too ready to condemn outright what displeases us instead of trying, not to reconcile the points of view, but to lay our own aside and approach the other in a spirit of sympathetic curiosity. This is the more necessary here because, with few exceptions, the poets cited in the *Lubáb* are distinctly minor and unable to rise above the elaborate conventions of the Persian *ars poetica*, which only the breath of genius can inspire with life. Moreover, in the opinion of an accomplished critic, Mírzá Muḥammad of Qazwín—whose introduction and notes to Professor Browne's edition are a model of patient and fruitful research—'Awfí has not selected the materials of his anthology to the best advantage.

Formally considered, Persian poetry falls into five main

[1] A more ancient work by Abú Ṭáhir al-Khátúní is mentioned by Ḥájjí Khalífa, but no copy has yet been discovered.

types, and four of these occur in the *Lubáb*, namely, the *qaṣída* or "purpose-poem," which is most often a panegyric but may be satirical, didactic, philosophical, or religious; the *ghazal*, of which the subject is usually love, human or divine; the *qiṭ'a* or fragment, which is either a piece of verse detached from a *qaṣída* or a poem complete in itself; and the *rubá'í* or quatrain. The fifth type, which is known by the name of *mathnawí*, includes poems longer than the *qaṣída*, such as epics, romances, and expositions of moral or mystical philosophy. Both in form and motive it stands apart from the rest and offers no temptation to the ordinary anthologist.

Before discussing further these various kinds of poetry and showing some of their peculiar characteristics by means of translation, I think it may be well to say a few words on certain matters of historical interest about which the reader will naturally wish to be informed. Let me begin by setting forth 'Awfí's description of the contents of the *Lubáb*. He divides it into twelve chapters, arranged as follows:

I. On the excellence of poetry and the poetic art.
II. On the etymological meaning of *shi'r* (poetry).
III. On the question who was the first poet.
IV. On the question who was the author of the first Persian poem.
V. On the choice poems of Sultans, Kings, and Amírs.
VI. On the choice poems of viziers and eminent statesmen.
VII. On the choice poems of religious leaders, divines, and men of learning.
VIII. On the choice poems of the poets of the House of Ṭáhir, the House of Layth, and the House of Sámán.
IX. On the poets of the House of Náṣir.
X. On the poets of the House of Seljúq, to the end of the reign of Sanjar.
XI. On the poets who flourished in the period extending from the death of Sanjar to the author's time.
XII. On the choice poems of eminent statesmen, poets, and scholars attached to the court of Sultan Náṣiru'ddín Qubácha.

The introductory chapters need not detain us. As regards the questions propounded in chapters III and IV, 'Awfí is inclined to accept the tradition that the first poet in the world was Adam, who composed an Arabic elegy (two verses of which are quoted) on his son Abel; and he ascribes the first Persian verse to "that great Hunter," King Bahrám Gúr. Remembering that 'Awfí was a courtier, we can excuse him for giving royalties and grandees the place of honour in his Anthology, but it tries our patience to read those noble amateurs whom he flatters so cheaply. Of the verse in this section of the book a page or two would hold all that is worth preserving for its own sake or on account of its association with great personages and events. The eighth and following chapters, which are printed in the second volume of Professor Browne's edition, constitute the kernel of the *Lubáb*. Here we find real bards, men devoted to the art and business of poetry, drawn up, rank on rank, in the chronological order of the dynasties under which they lived: the Ṭáhirids (A.D. 820–872); the Ṣaffárids, descended from Ya'qúb ibn Layth, the Coppersmith (A.D. 867–903); the Sámánids (A.D. 874–999); the Ghaznevids—called "the House of Náṣir" after Náṣiru'ddín Sabuktigín, who founded the dynasty—from the accession of Sultan Maḥmúd to the death of Mas'úd, the third sovereign of the line (A.D. 998–1040); and finally the Seljúqs, from Ṭughril to Sanjar (A.D. 1037–1157), and from Sanjar to the author's day (about A.D. 1220). Thus the whole period covered by the *Lubáb* is approximately four hundred years. Opening with the spring-time of Persian poetry which accompanied the movement towards national independence in eastern Írán, it runs a long and brilliant course ere it closes amidst the gathering darkness of the Mongol invasion.

Since my object is not so much to trace the historical development of this poetry as to illustrate its literary form and substance, the work of individuals will receive less attention than the four principal types which have been enumerated above. I will treat each type separately, taking the simpler first and leaving the *qaṣída*, the most artificial and complex, to the end.

The oldest Persian verse-form is probably the *rubá'í*. It contains four lines, of which the first, second, and fourth must rhyme with one another, while the third may or may not rhyme with the rest. Such an arrangement of rhymes, however, does not exhaust the definition: there must also be a certain metrical scheme. 'Awfí quotes two couplets by the Ṭáhirid poet, Ḥanẓala of Bádghís, which only fail to be a *rubá'í* because they are not written in one of the metres peculiar to this form:

> My sweetheart rue-seed on the fire threw
> For fear of harm the evil eye might do.
> Rue-seed and fire she needs not, with a face
> As bright as fire, a mole as dark as rue[1].

The *rubá'í* resembles a short epigram, in the Greek sense of the word, and the best specimens have something of the quality which belongs to the Greek as contrasted with the Latin epigram: simplicity and directness of style, weight rather than wit, terseness without "epigrammatic" point. It was FitzGerald, not Omar Khayyam, who wrote,

> For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
> Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!—

one of many instances in which the English version gives a new turn to the original. The *rubá'í*, again, is always a complete unit, unrelated to any larger whole. Persian literature furnishes no example of a poem like FitzGerald's, made up of a number of quatrains. In Persian *Díwáns* we often meet with collections of *rubá'ís*, but each one is absolutely independent, and its place in the series is determined by an external and fortuitous feature, namely, the alphabetical position of the letter that concludes the rhyme. There are no restrictions as to subject-matter. 'Awfí shows a marked preference for amatory *rubá'ís*, and we may presume that he knew what his readers liked. Among the chosen quatrains many are concerned with criticism of life in general or with topics suggested by a particular incident; others are

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 2, 11.

descriptive, encomiastic, elegiac, satirical, moral, or religious. Noteworthy, as revealing the limitations of the *Lubáb* and its author, is the fact that the mystical *rubá'í*—and, I may add, mystical poetry of any kind—is scarcely represented at all. One must go elsewhere to learn how beautiful is the literature in which the deepest aspirations of Persian thought have expressed themselves.

I will now give some examples. The first two are by Abu 'l-Ḥasan Ṭalḥa, of whose poetry the greater part belonged to this *genre*. Skill in composing quatrains might make a poet celebrated, even if his more ambitious performances fell flat[1].

My heart that rested calm and free from care
Rose up when love of thee alighted there;
The hand that loosed the bonds of Fate and Time
Thy curl hath bound it with a single hair[2].

O well of honey! Yestereve thy sight
Gladdened this heart that cries for thee to-night.
'Tis a thing unimaginable, the tale
Of to-night's anguish, yestereve's delight[3].

For thy love's sake I bled, and still implored in vain;
To patience then I fled, and still endured in vain.
There's no device on earth a desperate man can use
But I have used against thee, O Adored, in vain[4].

(Táju'ddín Ismá'íl al-Bákharzí.)

Why do I hope, with empty words cajoled,
Since I nor head nor tail in it behold?
Guess by the Past what this New Year shall bring:
The New Year—and ten thousand sorrows old![5]

(Táju'ddín Ismá'íl al-Bákharzí.)

Her beauty fills mine eye, and well must I agree
With mine own eye which holds my Sweetheart lovingly.
'Twixt eye and Sweetheart no right difference can be:
Either She takes eye's place, or eye is very She[6].

(Rashídí of Samarcand.)

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 336, 7 foll. [2] *Ibid*. II. 153, 19. [3] *Ibid*. II. 155, 7.
[4] *Ibid*. II. 158, 2. [5] *Ibid*. II. 158, 10.
[6] *Ibid*. II. 180, 16. This quatrain may be understood in a mystical sense.

Ah, my much love of thee hath laid me low,
Grief for thine absence bows me like a bow.
I have washed my hands of all thy tricks and wiles;
Lives there another who would treat me so?[1]

(Abú Shukúr.)

The following *rubá'í* is evidently mystical.

Soul of the World, to Thee I turn again
With bleeding heart, and bring Thee all my pain.
Myself behind, before me need and woe,
And love still waxing—never may it wane![2]

(Rafí' of Merv.)

When from her house the soul sets forth to climb
And hastens back to her eternal prime,
The four strings Nature fitted on Life's lute
Disorder'd break at the rude touch of Time[3].

(Badí'u'ddín Turkú al-Sanjarí.)

Long have I known the world and read its rede
In both extremes of fortune. 'Tis my creed,
Than wealth there's nothing better, next to faith,
As, next to unfaith, nothing worse than need[4].

(Abú Zurá'a of Jurján.)

Here are two quatrains which have a topical character. The first was composed by Rashídí of Samarcand, a panegyrist of Sultan Maliksháh.

Heav'n, which delight'st with contumely to brand
The wisest, how long will thy doomful hand
Plunge me in sadness? Oh, where shall I seek
The wind that blows me to sweet Samarcand?[5]

'Awfí relates that once he was in the company of a certain noble named Táju'ddín. A melon was brought in. Whilst Táju'ddín was helping himself to a slice, the knife slipped and

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 21, 21. [2] *Ibid.* II. 162, 10.
[3] *Ibid.* II. 351, 17. "The four strings" are the four elements from which all compound bodies—mineral, vegetable, and animal—are produced.
[4] *Ibid.* II. 10, 23. [5] *Ibid.* II. 181, 2.

cut his finger. The poet Sa'du'ddín Mas'úd Dawlatyár improvised this *rubá'í*:

Thy might o'ertops high Saturn's majesty,
Thy bounty's wine makes avarice drunk with glee.
Heav'n, plotting so that thou shouldst lavish less,
Closed one full channel of thy fivefold sea[1].

The *qiṭ'a* (fragment) is properly a subdivision of the *qaṣída*, *i.e.* it consists of a number of verses removed from their context in the *qaṣída* of which they formed a part. Such excerpts have no claim to be treated as an independent poetical type. But the name is also given to any poem, complete in itself, that follows the *qaṣída* pattern in respect of the monorhyme (which characterises all types of Persian verse except the *mathnawí*), and cannot be classified either as a *rubá'í* or a *ghazal*, or included among the verse-forms of less importance. To the *qiṭ'a*, thus defined, all that has been said above concerning the varied subject-matter of the *rubá'í* is applicable, but the former, not being so narrowly restricted in length, affords larger opportunities both in the choice of a theme and in the way of handling it. More unconventional and spontaneous than the *qaṣída* and *ghazal*, this type comes nearer to our ideal of poetry. The difference appears most conspicuously in the oldest Persian verse produced under the Ṭáhirids and their immediate successors. Of this only fragments survive[2], but they are enough to show that the first poets had not learned to use the style overloaded with ingenious rhetorical artifices, which makes the *Lubáb* such a tiresome book to read. Their language is generally plain and unaffected; in some pieces its simplicity is almost artless—

The cloud is weeping lover-like,
The garden smiling as a bride;
The thunder moaning, even as I
Make bitter moan at morningtide[3].
(Shahíd of Balkh.)

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 388, 15.

[2] This is not strictly accurate, if "fragment" is taken in its technical sense. The eighth chapter of the *Lubáb* contains one complete *qaṣída* as well as a few *ghazals* and *rubá'ís*. All the remaining poems are *qiṭ'as*.

[3] *Lubáb*, II. 4, 13.

The conceits in which the earliest poetry abounds are often so delicate and charming that it would be ungracious to accuse them of triviality. Besides, the criticism would not be just. Is anything really trivial that possesses artistic beauty? Ought we to despise Herrick's

> Some ask'd me where the rubies grew,
> And nothing did I say,
> But with my finger pointed to
> The lips of Julia,

because it is only a pretty fancy? Those who are superior to such things will take no more interest in 'Awfí's anthology than in the *Lyra Elegantiarum*. In order that my readers may obtain a fair view of the first sprightly runnings of Persian lyric verse, I will depart for the moment from the plan adopted in this essay and try to render into English some representative examples which were composed during the ninth and tenth centuries (A.D. 826–999).

First, a few fragments on the subject of wine.

> Choice wine, whose bitter strength can sweeten best
> The embittered mind, and flood
> The air with colour, as when goshawk's breast
> Is dyed with pheasant's blood[1].
>
> (Daqíqí.)

> A composite whose body is of light,
> But all its soul and spirit of fiery strain;
> A star that hath its setting in the mouth,
> But ever rises on the cheeks again[2].
>
> (Daqíqí.)

> Pour, boy, the vintage out
> That oft my grief consoled,
> That gushes from the flask
> In new moon's crescent mould,
> But in the cup appears
> The moon a fortnight old![3]
>
> (Abú Shukúr.)

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 13, 7. [2] *Ibid.* II. 13, 10. [3] *Ibid.* II. 21, 7.

Fetch me what first was like the eye, then came
The vine-grower and seized its soul aflame.
Let one drop trickle down to earth and roll,
'Twould seem the blind man's eye, the dead man's soul[1].

(Abú Shukúr.)

Fire and water blent in one,
'Twere a sight thou wouldst admire!
Lo, the miracle is done:
Yonder crystal cup, where gleams
Wine of purest ruby, seems
Water interfused with fire[2].

('Umára of Merv.)

The next piece is by the blind minstrel Rúdagí, the most famous poet of the Sámánid epoch.

Rúdagí the harp will play,
'Gin ye the wine, as he the lay.
Molten ruby or ruby wine,
None who sees it may divine,
Since Nature of one stuff did shape
The solid gem, the liquid grape.
Untouched, it stains the fingers red;
Untasted, flies into the head[3].

The following lines are less ancient, but were composed before A.D. 1050.

They drank of wine so pure and old,
Its body seemed to be ensouled;
And through them flowed that essence fine,
As fire bright through coal doth shine[4].

(Halíla.)

My last specimen of the wine-song is longer and more elaborate than any of these, and also differs from them all in having originally been the prelude of a *qaṣída*, as is shown by the double rhyme of the opening verse. The author, Kisá'í of Merv, was a well-known and singularly graceful poet who

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 21, 10.
[2] *Ibid.* II. 25, 4.
[3] *Ibid.* II. 8, 17.
[4] *Ibid.* II. 65, 19.

flourished in the latter half of the tenth century. I have attempted to imitate the *muḍári'* metre in which the fragment is written.

Unclose thine eyes and deeply
Shining amidst the grass-blades,
Even as a shamefaced lover,
Draws to his face the mantle

gaze on the saffron-flower[1]
a very pearl in sheen,
to hide his blushing cheeks,
in folds of satin green.

The wine thro' darting sunbeams
But oh, when falls reflected
The blue glass and red vintage
Are violet, you'ld fancy,

how sweet and fair to see!
therein the radiant shower,
and golden-yellow rays
and poppy and saffron-flower.

So bright 'tis, when it trickles
You'ld say from pearls is trickling
So clear 'tis, when you pour it
Nor palm from cup you ever

down from the goblet's mouth,
cornelian red and fine;
in the hollow of your palm,
would know, nor cup from wine[2].

The same freshness and easy grace of style appears in the poems descriptive of love and beauty which have come down to us from that early time. Some of those translated below are properly *ghazals*, not *qiṭ'as*.

O would that in the world there were no night,
That I might ne'er be parted from her lips!
No scorpion-sting would sink deep in my heart
But for her scorpion coils of darkest hair.
If 'neath her lip no starry dimple shone,
I would not linger with the stars till day;
And if she were not cast in beauty's mould,
My soul would not be moulded of her love.
If I must live without my Well-belov'd,
O God! I would there were no life for me[3].

(Daqíqí.)

Abú Shu'ayb of Herát wrote the following verses on a Christian boy.

[1] The *shanbalíd* is identified with fenugreek—a species of clover—or with meadow saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*). According to Ibnu 'l-Bayṭár, it is one of the first spring flowers.

[2] *Lubáb*, II. 34, 20. [3] *Ibid.* II. 12, 11.

Faith-doomed to Hell, his form and face of Paradise,
With fawn's eyes, curly tresses, tulip cheeks.
A lip as when from Chinese painter's brush
O'er vermeil oozes the long silver line.
Should he bestow his beauty on the Ethiop,
The Ethiop would be envied by the Turk[1].

The tulips of thy cheek, when thou unveil'st,
Abash the Sun: behind the veil he hies.
If the apple hath a mole of musky grain,
That chin of thine's an apple every wise[2].

(Rúdagí.)

Here are three couplets from a *ghazal* composed by Júybárí, a poet of Bukhárá, who was a goldsmith and expert in his craft. The original metre is imitated.

That idol fair, whose kisses
Alas, she still denies me
Now I, for love's sake weeping,
'Tis well: the cloud of April
At dawn above the garden
Emparadised with roses

are balm to the broken-hearted,
the balm that heals my sorrow.
an April cloud resemble.
works miracles of beauty.
it passed, and in a moment
from end to end the garden[3].

Those jet curls clustered on her silver brow—
A swarm of negroes Baghdád plundering!
That cheek on which falls rippling one black tress,
You'ld say 'tis fire fanned by raven's wing[4].

(Muḥammad ibn Ṣáliḥ al-Walwálají.)

Those curls the wind is tossing to and fro
Are like a restless lover; nay, the hand
Of warring Emperor's chamberlain that waves
From the far tent, "To-day no audience here!"[5]

(Khabbází of Níshápúr.)

Beauty's queen by lovers guarded,
You whose cheeks the moon doth glass,
Where you glance, narcissus blooming;
The moon rising, where you pass!

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 5, 19.
[2] *Ibid.* II. 8, 9.
[3] *Ibid.* II. 11, 10.
[4] *Ibid.* II. 22, 15.
[5] *Ibid.* II. 27, 19.

Oh, your face and hair—the fairest
Book of white and black is this!
Cheek and tress are sin and penance,
Lip and eye are bale and bliss[1]. (Kisá'í.)

The objective and pictorial character which the reader will doubtless have remarked in the poems inspired by love and wine is still more conspicuous in the pieces describing Nature. Seldom in either case do we find any intimacy of passion, any depth of moral or spiritual emotion. These lyrics express the keen sensuous feeling of the poet, his joy in visible and material things and his grief at their loss, but they express it objectively so far as the feeling itself becomes subordinate to the fanciful imagery in which it is clothed. Many of the poems on spring and the beauty of spring flowers are little idylls, exquisite of their kind. I will first quote two descriptions of stormy weather about the time of the Persian New Year.

The world with snow was silvered for a season,
But emerald came instead of the heaps of silver.
The rich pagoda of Cashmere at springtide
Surrendered to the garden all its pictures.
See how the lake's whole surface by the March wind
Is raised, like sturgeon's back, in scaly ridges![2]

('Umára of Merv.)

Lashed by gusts the leafy willows
Are as drunkards reeling headlong.
Watch the crimson tulips waving
Bloodied sword-points in the dawn![3]

('Umára of Merv.)

Of all the innumerable tributes which Persian poets have offered to the rose, I know of none so charming as these lines by Kisá'í:

Roses are a gift of price
Sent to us from Paradise;
More divine our nature grows
In the Eden of the rose.

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 37, 19. [2] *Ibid.* II. 24, 21. [3] *Ibid.* II. 25, 17.

Roses why for silver sell?
O rose-merchant, fairly tell
What you buy instead of those
That is costlier than the rose[1].

Here are two fragments:

See the rose, its pearly whiteness
Overblushed with pure cornelian,
Like the wedding-day of lovers
Sleeping, cheek on cheek laid softly[2].

(Manjík.)

Behold the red rose, not yet fully blown—
A dainty fondling worshipping her idol,
Or like the loved one's lips, red, small, and close
When she looks up to meet her lover's kiss[3].

(Kawkabí of Merv.)

Even in their laudatory verses the diction of these poets is plain and direct. Being Persians and courtiers, they do not measure their compliments by the merit of their patrons, but if they are not sincere, they at least seem so—an illusion which is no longer possible when the art of exaggeration has hardened into an obviously rhetorical exercise. The following lines by Faḍl ibn 'Abbás al-Rabinjaní lament the death of the Sámánid prince, Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, and celebrate the accession of Núḥ ibn Manṣúr.

A prince hath passed of noble race,
A prince high-born hath ta'en his place.
Time mourns for him that passed away,
For him that's crowned the world is gay.
Look now with reason's eye and tell
How just is God in what befell!
For if one Light from us He reft,
Another in its place He left;
If Saturn rose with baleful power,
Yet soon returned Jove's gracious hour[4].

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 35, 24.
[2] *Ibid.* II. 14, 24.
[3] *Ibid.* II. 65, 13.
[4] *Ibid.* II. 9, 22.

The next examples take a more personal tone and are marked by greater finish of style.

To ward the kingdom, Fortune took thy sword,
And Bounty chose thy hand, herself to ward.
In Heav'n for thy decree Fate listening stands,
The dínár[1] from its ore sets out to win thy hands[2].

(Daqíqí.)

Tho' such thine art to paint and skill to sing,
That none but thee should dare lift up his head,
Thy proper qualities thou canst not sing,
The portrait of thyself thou canst not paint[3].

(Kisá'í.)

Firdawsí extols the munificence and bravery of Sultan Maḥmúd in four lines which are worth many bombastic *qaṣídas*:

I see thou holdest cheap two things
That are held dear by other kings:
Gold, when thy head doth wear the crown;
Life, when thou putt'st the helmet on[4].

The following *qiṭ'as* belong to different periods and illustrate the wide range of subject permitted to poems of this type.

Besides the few lines which I have just quoted, the only specimen preserved by 'Awfí of Firdawsí's lyrical verse is a fragment in which the aged poet looks back upon long years of ill-rewarded toil when he was engaged in gathering materials for his *Sháhnáma*.

Much have I laboured, much read o'er
Of Arabic and Persian lore,
Collecting tales unknown and known;
Now two and sixty years are flown.
Regret, and deeper woe of sin,
'Tis all that youth has ended in,
And I with mournful thoughts rehearse
Bú Ṭáhir Khusrawání's verse:
"I mind me of my youth and sigh,
Alas for youth, for youth gone by!"[5]

[1] The Arabicised form of *denarius*.
[2] *Lubáb*, II. 11, 21.
[3] *Ibid*. II. 37, 16.
[4] *Ibid*. II. 33, 12.
[5] *Ibid*. II. 33, 15.

Many *qiṭ'as* are what the French call *vers d'occasion* in the sense that their subject or motive is supplied by some circumstance of passing interest. The poet Farrukhí, a contemporary of Firdawsí at the court of Ghazna, having amassed a large fortune, set out on a pleasure-trip to Samarcand. He had nearly reached his journey's end when he was attacked by brigands, who carried off the whole of his wealth. Being penniless and without resources, he did not venture to show himself in Samarcand, and after a few days returned home, leaving as a memorial of his visit the following lines:

Before me lay the riches
Of lordly Samarcand,
I looked o'er grove and garden,
O'er vale and meadow-land.

But since my purse was empty,
My pocket bare as thread,
The rug of joy I folded,
From the hall of hope I fled.

I had heard in every city
Famed scholars oft declare,
"Eight are the Paradises,
And but one Kawthar there."[1]

Here bloom a thousand Edens,
A thousand Kawthars foam,
But ah me! what avail they,
Since I go thirsty home?

When hand a dirhem lacketh
Whilst eye sees all its wish,
'Tis like a head dissevered
Within a golden dish[2].

Although in his earlier poems Farrukhí cultivated a subtle and artificial style, he finally sought and attained the ease that "comes by art, not chance"; and this manner of writing (*sahl-i mumtani'*) distinguishes the pieces by which he is

[1] Kawthar is the name of a river in Paradise, "whiter than milk and sweeter than honey."

[2] *Lubáb*, II. 48, 1.

represented in the *Lubáb*. Here is the prelude of a *qaṣída* addressed to Sultan Maḥmúd:

I said, "O Sun of beauty, kiss me thrice!"
Said she, "The sun in this world no lips touch."
I said, "A new world for a kiss! Too much."
Said she, "Thou canst not cheapen Paradise."
Said I, "Thy stature tall hath bended me."
"The arrow companies the bow," said she.

"Dew of mine eyes hath freshed thy face," I said.
Said she, "Water keeps gardens fresh and fine."
I said, "On thy bright cheek shall I lay mine?"
Said she, "No, no: thy yellow[1] will dull my red."
Said I, "Thine absence, Dear, hath agèd me."
"Grow young in service of the King," said she[2].

The author of the next two pieces is Anwarí, the most renowned of the Seljúq court-poets, who died *circa* A.D. 1190.

O mighty Prince, whose majesty sublime
Scarce deigns to mount the piebald steed of Time;
Whose judgment hits the mark of empire high,
As 'twere an arrow quivered in the Sky—
To-day hath Heav'n arrayed his cloudy throne,
The wind shoots keener shafts than Árish's own[3];
On every mountain-angle snowflakes star
The landscape, like a jewelled scimitar.
And I have graced my song, as well I may,
With the sweet prelude of another's lay.
For whosoe'er of such a day hath sight,
(Now chiefly when the tangled locks of Night
Fall thickliest) to his mind will come the line,
"To-day's the day for tent and fire and wine."[4]
The Nine Spheres' influence keep thee safe and fast,
While the Four Elements and Six Directions last![5]

[1] The hue of "pale passion" in the East.
[2] *Lubáb*, II. 49, 13. Three verses are omitted in the translation.
[3] Árish was a Persian knight renowned for his skill with the bow.
[4] I have not been able to discover the author of this line.
[5] *Lubáb*, II. 137, 10.

Anwarí does not disguise his contempt for the art of poetry as practised by the professional *qaṣída*-writers amongst whom he had reluctantly enrolled himself. It was a choice of evils, and he resolved to be a rich poet rather than a poor scholar. Towards the end of his life, however, as the following lines testify, he shook off the galling and debasing fetters to which long years of court-patronage had not inured him, and found happiness where his own tastes pointed it out—in solitude, and quiet study,

*secretum iter et fallentis semita uitae.*

Yesterday a dear one asked me, "Will you sing of love again?"
Nay, I have done with poetising, fallen from my hand the pen.
Long in error's way I chanted lofty praise and satire stern,
Now those days are gone behind me—vanished never to return.
Love-lay, panegyric, satire, I was making all the three—
Why? Because lust, greed, and anger dwelt unitedly in me:
Lust the livelong night tormenting evermore my sleepless brain
To describe a ringlet's crescent and a lip like sugar-cane;
Greed all day in tribulation pondering o'er a scrap of verse
Where, from whom, and how five dirhems might be coaxed into my purse;
Anger, like a wounded mongrel, solace for his smart would fetch,
Tooth and claw in sullen fury turning on some weaker wretch.
Since the grace of God Almighty shown unto His helpless thrall
Hath unchained me from those harpies—so may He release you all!—
Love-lay, panegyric, satire shall I make now? Heav'n forfend!
I have wronged enough already soul and mind: 'tis time to mend.
Anwarí, beware of boasting!—Honour lays on that a ban—
But when once thy word is plighted, see thou keep it like a man.
From the busy world retired dwell and seek the way that saves!
Very soon the last goes o'er thee of thy life-tide's ebbing waves[1].

When Anwarí condemns "boasting" as ungentlemanly, he means, of course, loud and vain words promising deeds that are never performed. Amongst Moslems, boasting of another sort is a traditional prerogative of the poet, handed

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 136, 14.

down from pre-Islamic days when the Bedouin bards in glorifying themselves did honour to the tribe of which they were the foremost champions and spokesmen. Persian *fakhr* has no such narrow but intense background of patriotism to relieve its extravagance: it is frankly personal, as in the shorter of the two specimens translated below, which was composed by a minstrel of the Sámánid age, while in the minor poets of the succeeding periods it is often distinguished from vulgar self-advertisement only by its literary flavour and the fantastic heights of hyperbole to which it soars.

When silver they ask of me, gold I fling;
The power of my song, when they bid me sing,
Makes wax of stubborn steel.
When the wind's abroad, with the wind I roam:
Now with cup and lute I leave my home,
Now armed from head to heel[1].

(Abú Zurá'a of Jurján.)

The following version retains the monorhyme:

I am he who bore the flag of knowledge through the universe,
From the Pleiads' angle down to Earth's deep centre, everywhere.
With my strength of understanding Mars himself in vain would cope;
Matched with my keen flame of wit the Sun's own rays are dull and rare.
Monarchs boast that I have sung for them and praised them in my song,
Schoolmen vow my lore and learning is a model past compare.
Robed in loveliness at all times is my genius, like the sky;
Pure and undefiled my poesy at all times, like the air.
Of my genius evidence enow my style and diction bring,
To my poesy an ample witness my ideas bear[2].

('Abdu 'l-Wási' of Jabal.) See Coc.

This *qiṭ'a* by Rúḥí shows that a reputation for satirical pleasantry might be embarrassing to its owner.

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 10, 13.

[2] *Ibid.* II. 108, 13.

To-day, when like a donkey from his meal
Driv'n off, I know what Fortune's outcasts feel,
Some evil-minded and suspicious men
Call satire every eulogy I pen.
If I but breathe a prayer to God on high,
"This fellow is reviling us," they cry[1].

Abú Ṭáhir al-Khusrawání, one of whose verses had the luck to be quoted in a poem of Firdawsí, said in the course of a *qaṣída* composed when he was suffering from a mortal disease:

I baffled four professions; in despair
They left me, and I see no symptom yet
Of cure by doctor's drug, ascetic's prayer,
Stargazer's fortune, sorcerer's amulet[2].

During the middle Seljúq period the people of Tirmidh groaned under the oppression inflicted on them by a tyrannous governor, named Akhṭí; and as 'Awfí puts it, "so many pregnant sighs ascended to Heaven that at last the angels charged themselves with the task of fulfilling the prayers of his victims." One day, while carousing, he swallowed a deep draught of wine, some of which "stuck in his throat" and choked him to death. The poet Adíb-i Ṣábir wrote this *qiṭ'a* by way of epitaph:

Straight from the feast, Akhṭí, you went to Hell—
A hundred thousand blessings light upon that day of revel!
Since you departed, all the world is well.
May God have mercy on your death, tho' you are with the Devil![3]

Most of the elegiac pieces in 'Awfí's collection seem to us superficial in feeling and undignified in expression. We find it hard to imagine that true affection and tender sorrow can indulge in pretty (and even witty) conceits, but there have been epochs in English literature when this combination did not appear so incongruous as it does now. If we remember that contemporary taste allowed Donne to conclude his "Elegy on the Lord C." with the couplet:

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 166, 2. [2] *Ibid.* II. 20, 15. [3] *Ibid.* II. 123, 20.

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Here needs no marble tomb, since he is gone;
He, and about him his, are turn'd to stone—

we shall be less disposed to ridicule Kisá'í for writing on the death of a certain notable of Merv:

I know not what strange hap thy funeral was,
That bathed bright eyes in dew, torn cheeks in blood.
All Merv became a Flood of tears for thee,
Thy coffin was the Ark upon the Flood[1].

Adíb-i Ṣábir, who has been mentioned above, wrote the following elegy on his mistress. The English rendering imitates the Persian monorhyme.

My sweetheart went to yonder world, to see amongst the houris there
If she might find for loveliness her parallel in yonder world.
Riẓwán unbarr'd the gate for her, because her hair's dark violet
And bosom's jessamine adorned no damozel in yonder world.
How all the pains and agonies of earth and heaven do load my heart,
Since I am lingering here, but she is gone to dwell in yonder world![2]

Beside this piece may be set the lines attributed to Sultan Maḥmúd of Ghazna on the death of a slave-girl to whom he was fondly attached.

O Moon! since thou in earth entombed dost lie,
I love earth more than sky.
"Patience!" to my despairing heart I said,
"God's fate is justly sped.
Of earth was Adam; and his children all
Return, like him, to their original."[3]

Rúdagí's lament for the poet Abu 'l-Ḥasan Murádí of Bukhárá, which is among the first elegies written in Persian, has an austere dignity of its own.

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 34, 15.
[2] *Ibid.* II. 124, 9.
[3] *Ibid.* I. 24, 23.

Murádí dead!—meseems, he hath not died;
The death of such a Master is no light thing.
His dear soul to the Father he gave back,
To the Mother his dark body he resigned[1].

Unlike the *qiṭ'a*, which lends itself to every conceivable topic and occasion, the *ghazal* is pre-eminently, though not exclusively, consecrated to Love. Shorter than the *qaṣída*, but otherwise resembling it in form, it differs from it—and from the *qiṭ'a* also—in having less continuity and a looser connexion of ideas. The treatment of the subject is extremely conventional, and there are other features which not only make the *ghazal* unpleasing to modern taste but force the translator either to select with caution or run the risk of shocking his readers. We meet with the same difficulty in Greek literature: it will be enough to recall the names of Plato and Strato. As regards Persian poetry, this aspect of love is prominent in the lyrics, while in epic and romantic verse the normal relations of men and women are depicted. Many *ghazals* contain nothing to indicate the sex of the person addressed, an ambiguity which is favoured by the fact that Persian has no grammatical gender; and even when it is certain that the charms of a youth are celebrated, as in the first of the following specimens, one can scarcely feel the subject to be offensive, so fanciful and remote from actuality is the style.

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 8, 3. These lines are imitated by Jalálu'ddín Rúmí in his ode on the death of Saná'í, beginning:

Quoth some one, "Master Saná'í is dead."
The death of such a Master is no little thing.

See text and translation in my *Selected Poems from the Díwán-i Shams-i Tabríz*, No. XXII. p. 86. Jalálu'ddín's version of Rúdagí's second couplet is,

The earthly frame he flung to earth,
Soul and intellect he bore to heaven.

According to the theory of Moslem natural philosophers, it is the influence of the Planets (the Seven Fathers) acting upon the Elements (the Four Mothers) that produces the ever changing forms of life in the sub-lunary world. By the metaphysicians, however, this function is assigned to the Active Intelligence (*intellectus agens*, the νοῦς ποιητικὸς of Aristotle), which is probably "the Father" in Rúdagí's verse.

O thou whose cheeks are the Pleiades and whose lips are coral,
Thy Pleiades are the torment of the heart, thy coral is the food of the soul.
In chase of those Pleiades my back hath become like the sky[1],
For love of that coral my eyes have become like the sea.

Methinks, thy down is a smoke thro' which are seen rose-leaves,
Methinks, thy tresses are a cloud in which is hidden the sun—
A smoke that hath set my stack on fire,
A cloud that hath loosed from mine eyes the rain.

Thine eye, by wounding my heart, hath made me helpless;
Thy tress, by ravishing my soul, hath made me distraught.
If thine eye pierces my heart, 'tis right, for thou art my sweetheart;
And if thy tress ravishes my soul, 'tis fair, for thou art my soul's desire.

In peace, the banquet-hall without thy countenance is not lighted;
In war, the battle-field without thy stature is not arrayed.
The banquet-hall without thy countenance is the sky without the moon;
The battle-field without thy stature is the garden without the cypress.

My body is in pain from thine eye full of enchantments,
My heart is in sorrow from thy tresses full of guile—
A pain that thy sight turns in a moment to pleasure,
A sorrow that thy speech turns in an instant to joy.

Thy face is a tulip for delicacy and pinkness,
Thy teeth are pearls for brightness and purity.
I never heard of pearls in honey-laden coral,
I never heard of tulips amidst musk-shedding hyacinths[2].

(Mu'izzí.)

Since Mu'izzí, who died about 1150, was an original writer and seems entitled to the distinction of having first developed the characteristic *Persici apparatus* of court-

[1] *I.e.* curved.

[2] *Lubáb*, II. 70, 14. "Musk-shedding hyacinths," *i.e.* dark fragrant locks.

poetry, I will translate another *ghazal* by him, reproducing the metre as far as is possible in English.

If my Belov'd—fair picture!—
deigned but to look upon me,
My passion's grief and sorrow
were not so sore a burden;
And if her glance tale-telling
had not revealed her secret,
From all the world my secret
would have been hidden always.
'Twould seem as though I dwelt in
a Paradise of gladness,
If now and then my Sweetheart
along the road were passing.
O that my food were made of
her lips' twin rubies only,
That o'er her in requital
mine eye might shed its rubies!
And O that she would never
my banquet leave behind her,
That with her cheeks my banquet
might glow like beds of tulips![1]

These poems, with their naive parallelisms and decorative metaphors, have an elegance and ease of expression that deserve to be admired. But though Persian amatory verse is seldom deficient in beauty of form, those who are most familiar with it will confess that, as a whole, it suggests "the little emptiness of love" rather than *la grande passion*. There are important exceptions, *e.g.*, the semi-mystical odes in which Love has become a religion and the worship of human beauty is subtly mingled with raptures of divine enthusiasm. In the *Lubáb*, however, this high note is only heard at long intervals, and then imperfectly. The fashionable love-lyric runs in a narrow mould which very few Moslem poets have dared to break. Like medieval Minnesong, it is artificial and monotonous in phrase, and its sentiment (which may be quite genuine) leaves us unmoved. I do not think it is chance that the following lines—an almost unique outburst of passionate feeling—were written by a woman, Rábi'a, the daughter of Ka'b.

This is my curse on thee. God send thou love
One like thyself, unkind and obdurate,
That knowing Love's deep cautery thou mayst writhe
In loneliness, and know my worth too late![2]

Rábi'a was nicknamed "the Brazen Fly"—a phrase which occurs in one of her poems. An accomplished hetaera,

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 74, 6.

[2] *Ibid*. II. 62, 14.

*docta sermones utriusque linguae*, she wrote verse in Arabic as well as in Persian.

I will now translate a few short *ghazals* by different hands. They have been chosen for their simplicity and comparative lack of rhetorical ornaments.

All busy selfishness from mind I banished
When first I played with thee in love's sweet strife;
Ready was I and ripe for death the instant
I clasped thee to my bosom close as life.

Oh, many a night I threatened thee with parting,
But when day came I fell in love once more.
In vain I pleaded, for thou wouldst not listen;
I found thee deaf and ran towards the door.

The tree of bliss I planted in love's garden,
The fruit it bore was absence and regret[1].
Have I forgotten thee, as thou pretendest?
Nay, 'tis most false. God knows if I forget![2]

(Samá'í of Merv.)

My sweetheart keeps not any touch of kindness,
The only craft she knows is—to be cruel.
Her beauteous face, you dare not look upon it;
Scornful she moves away, a stately cypress.
When I speak words of love, she makes no answer:
All her delight is holy vows and prayers.
Oh, what a smiling aspect wears the lover
Who courts a mistress, not a sainted vestal!
Buy with my soul a kiss from her I will not,
And well I know she is not fond of giving.
Her kisses must be bought with very life-blood,
She hath no kisses that are purchased cheaply[3].

(Samá'í of Merv.)

Until I know my Fair is mine,
My budded hopes will never bloom,
For I must languish and repine
Till she into my arms is come.

[1] Reading كِشتم for گشتم and بَر بر گرفتم for برتر گرفتم.

[2] *Lubáb*, II. 145, 14.

[3] *Ibid*. II. 145, 21.

Until I catch her restless curl,
My fevered heart will never rest,
And life is but a dead leaf's twirl
Till close I hold her to my breast.

For thy sake life and youth were dear;
Now, without thee, I wish them gone.
The day I dreamed should send thee here,
Alas! that day will never dawn[1].

(Táju'ddín Ismá'íl al-Bákharzí.)

Thou who didst leave thy lover most innocent forsaken,
From thee despite I suffer, friends eye me with suspicion.
If 'tis a crime to love thee, that crime have I committed;
Yet for this cause no lover, I trow, was e'er forsaken.
The crime that was thy doing I took upon my shoulders,
In vain I strove and struggled—what helps a thing down-trodden?
Thou keep'st me late and early in mourning for thine absence[2],
Mine eyes with blood bedabbled, my raiment torn to pieces.
To hear against thy lover the words of those who hate him,
Oh, 'tis a crime notorious in gentlefolk's opinion[3].

(Sayfí of Níshápúr.)

O thou by whose fair face my life is led,
One day with thee is joy that never dies.
Without thy favour no desire is fed,
Without thy beauty no delight can rise.
Thy face forgetting, if one breath I take,
That breath I count not of my life a part.
Thine absence wrings my inmost heart with ache,
O joy and health and ache of my inmost heart!
Say once, "My lover is my slave," that Fame
May know me when thou call'st me by this name![4]

(Rafí' of Merv.)

The roses of thy cheeks at last will fade and languish,
At last this lovelorn heart will throb no more in anguish.
Why buildest thou so much on fortune's passing favour?
Ere long thy sun will set and disappear for ever.

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 156, 20.

[2] Reading داریم for درآیم.

[3] *Lubáb*, II. 160, 1.

[4] *Ibid*. II. 162, 15.

Thy beauty and my love—the love thou art still disdaining—
In the glinting of an eye they leave no trace remaining.
Deal not in wounds nor drive a busy trade of sorrow!
Thy mart is thronged to-day, but few will come to-morrow[1].

(Rafí' of Merv.)

The following *ghazal* is purely mystical. Its author, Fakhru'ddín Mas'údí of Merv, was not a professional poet, but a famous scholar and theologian. His biography, therefore, belongs to the first volume of the *Lubáb*, but 'Awfí having inadvertently omitted it in its proper place has inserted it in the second part of his work.

Deep in the desert of Thy love uncrossed
Wander like me a thousand wretches lost.
Love to their anguish myriad guises lends,
Anguish their souls in myriad pieces rends.
Thy beauty is the medicine of their care,
Union with Thee their hope that kills despair.
Unless with loving hand Thou lead them on,
Their souls will go the way their hearts have gone.
Where Thou art throned above our human fate,
Fraud and religion bear an equal rate[2];
Milk of Thy grace the wise old man, world-soiled,
Tastes and becomes again a new-born child[3].

The *qaṣída* is the consummate type of Persian court-poetry, and in accordance with that definition its primary motive is praise, which might more accurately be termed flattery, of the great. Since no bard who knew his business could afford to economise in compliments, the *qaṣída* is generally a long poem, ranging from twenty or thirty to well over a hundred couplets.

Whatever metre be chosen, the rhyme-system is invariable. The opening couplet always has two rhymes, one in each hemistich, and the same rhyme is repeated at the end of every succeeding couplet until the poem is finished. To write a full-length *qaṣída* under such conditions, without

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 162, 21.

[2] Reading پتیاره for سیاره.

[3] *Lubáb*, II. 164, 4.

injuring the artistic effect, demands great skill; in English, where rhymes are much scarcer, it could not be done except as a *tour de force*. For the sake of those who do not read Persian I translate a few couplets in order to show how the exordium of a *qaṣída* is rhymed.

O heart, bring the good news! She I love best is coming.
O eye, prepare the lodging, for thy guest is coming.
O body, though love hath brought thee to thy latest breath,
Yet forward send thy soul! She of thy quest is coming.
Now once again make merry with new glee: the end
Of absence long that burns the aching breast is coming.
The days of grief and woe and anguish—all are past;
The hour of peace and joy and balmful rest is coming[1].

Here each couplet (there are fifteen in the original) ends with the words *hamí rasad*, "is coming," which constitute what is called the *radíf*, while the rhyme proper is formed by the syllable immediately preceding it.

I have said that the *qaṣída* is properly a panegyric; and this statement, though by no means of universal application, holds good in regard to most of the *qaṣídas* quoted in the *Lubáb*. If they had contained nothing else than flattery of kings and nobles, they would have been insufferably tedious to us, and perhaps even to those eminent persons whose munificence they were designed to stimulate. Sa'dí, in the *Galistán*[2], tells a story about some dervishes with whom he consorted. They enjoyed a regular allowance from a certain grandee, but in consequence of an act committed by one of them he withdrew his patronage. Sa'dí resolved to intercede on his friends' behalf. He paid a visit to the great man, who received him with marks of honour and esteem. "*I sat down*," he says, "*and conversed on every topic until the subject of my friends' offence came up*"; and he goes on to relate how he gained his end. The structure of the *qaṣída* exemplifies this rule of courtly etiquette. Instead of coming straight to the point (which is, in plain terms, to give praise in hope of getting a reward), the poet begins his ode with an elaborate descrip-

[1] *Lubdb*, II. 329, 12.

[2] Book I, Story 18.

tion of a handsome youth or a beautiful garden or some equally irrelevant topic; and having thus won the ear of his prospective patron, he glides as dexterously as he can from the exordium (*nasíb*) into the encomium (*madíḥ*). Although the two have no real connexion with each other, so that the *qaṣída* lacks organic unity, the whole poem is endowed with unity of purpose, inasmuch as the prelude contributes to the success of the panegyric and aims indirectly at bringing about the same result.

"Some excellent authorities have said that the *nasíb* is a *ghazal* with which the poet, according to convention, introduces his principal theme, in order that, by reason of the fondness that most men have for hearing the various emotions of the lover and the beloved and their mutual dalliance described, the person to whom the poem is addressed may listen attentively and divert his thoughts from other cares; and in order that he may be led by this means to apprehend the main purpose of the *qaṣída* with a collected mind and a calm soul, and bestow on it a greater measure of approbation. Anwarí says:

She came to me at day-rise, the Sun amongst the fair,
Her figure a tall cypress, her cheek a bright full-moon.
Her ruby lip was setting on fire a thousand souls,
Her ringlet's tip was leading in chains a thousand hearts.
Against the souls in ambush her locks had loosed their might;
Her amorous glance an arrow, poised on the eyebrow's bow[1]."

Whereas in the encomium the poet is a slave to his profession, the *nasíb* gives him an opportunity of displaying his powers on a subject that does not constrain him to use fine rhetoric or fulsome adulation. In this part of the *qaṣída* we sometimes chance on passages of fresh and opulent beauty or tinged with a maturer charm of melancholy, which bid us pause when we are tempted to cry out that these Oriental Pindars are unreadable. The few versions given here show that love, though it is a favourite subject of the *nasíb*, is not the only one, as the words quoted from Shams-i Qays suggest.

[1] The *Mu'jam* of Shams-i Qays, ed. by Mírzá Muḥammad and E. G. Browne (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, vol. x.), 383, 19.

When from the night's dark rising
That beauty springlike-joyous
Her loveliness so tender,
Before her jewelled splendour
The treasurer of Glory
From the fair maids of Khoten
And whispering softly, softly,
"Why art thou fain to leave me?
Ah, stay, for here beside me
My cheeks are damask roses,
And rest thine eye on the wine-cup,
The tulip's rain-washed petals,
a little space had past,
into the garden came—
peris would worship it;
idols would kiss the earth.
she robbed of his guarded grace,
she bore the palm away—
spake to me: "Why," said she,
What is this purpose fell?
spring reigns in autumn's stead;
my chin a white lily.
then wilt thou praise no more
the dew-bright jessamine."[1]

(Masrúr ibn Muḥammad of Ṭáliqán.)

The poet, of course, remains deaf to her appeal and pursues his journey to the vizier whose patronage he was seeking. In the following exordium 'Unṣurí describes the battle-field of Sultan Maḥmúd.

A scene like Paradise! 'Tis not Farkhár[2],
Yet all the splendour of Farkhár is there.
Kisses of loyal kings imprint the earth,
Faces of fair youths fill with light the air.
Then look how gold and silver Pleiades
Bestud the rolling sky of scimitars,
And how, like dagger's pearl-encrusted haft,
Each baldrick shows its blazonry of stars!
Mark yonder troop belted with golden swords,
Whereon pomegranate-red you may behold
Rubies like tears of blood distilled in pain
From lover's eyes o'er cheeks as pale as gold.
On the ranked elephants their golden harness
Glitters like saffron flowers on some hillside;
Serpents their trunks might seem: in such a coat
Of golden scales the serpent's self doth glide.
Darkful as thunderclouds, with dagger-tusks,
Their mountain-forms move wind-like o'er the plain.
What place is this? The battle-field, in sooth,
Of the world's Emperor and Suzerain![3]

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 43, 9.
[2] A city in Turkestan famous for the beauty of its inhabitants.
[3] *Lubáb*, II. 29, 12.

Anwarí, as we have seen, was far from happy in his profession. These opening lines of one of his most celebrated *qaṣídas* were, no doubt, inspired by the conflict of the better which he saw and approved with the worse which he followed.

Unless Fate rules the course of life entire,
Why fall things not according to desire?
To good or evil, as Fate pulls the rein,
So runs the world; and all is planned in vain.

Day after day a thousand pictures pass,
But never Truth appears in Fancy's glass.
"How? Why?" The Painter of these changing scenes,
He works *without* a cause, *without* a means.

Our hands are impotent to loose or bind,
Life's joy and sorrow let us meet resigned.
Beneath yon sky-blue dome our earthly state
Hangs on the order of celestial Fate.

O Time, great lord of Nature! since by thee
My body natural is held in fee,
Why with such eager spite dost thou devise,
Most ancient humpback! torments for the wise?

No mind can reach thy revolution's cause,
No eye discover thy mysterious laws.
From thy dark wheels what anguish o'er me fell,
Ah! 'tis a plaint would take long years to tell[1].

Very often the *nasíb* is a description of the coming of Spring, a season which the poets associate with wine-drinking amidst flowers and with all sorts of festivity.

O paradisal beauty! come, fetch the cup of wine.
Sweet April hath apparelled the world like Paradise.
The field flings down a carpet of pictured tapestry,
And pridefully the garden puts on a crown of pearls.

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 127, 18.

A picture of Khawarnaq[1]
A satin-woven carpet
This like a Chinese temple,
That like the house of Máni[2],
parterre and garden seem,
mountain and meadow-land:
splendid with China's art,
with lovely paintings hung.

Lo, there the rich tiara
See how the queenly roses
Roses like cheeks of houris,
Jasmines like lawns of Eden,
of gems on the jasmine-bough!
unfold their broideries!
laden with spicy curls;
fragrant and beautiful.

As 'twere a bride, the rosebush
Tirewoman-like is laving
Now round her neck arranging
Now drawing o'er her blushes
arrays herself; the cloud
the dust and grime away,
a string of pearly tears,
a veil of gauzy mist.

Those tulips, where the cloud's eye
Well might'st thou call them flagons
Or flashes of keen fire
Of Badakhshání ruby
hath hid its weeping showers,
of onyx filled with wine,
in water, or bright waves
tossing in seas of Spring[3].
('Am'aq of Bukhárá.)

Such passages—and there are many of equal or superior merit—redeem the courtly *qaṣída* from utter barrenness. Artificial as they are, they are not consciously insincere, and one can admire the workmanship without feeling that all beneath is tainted. This saving clause does not extend to the panegyric. Here the moral character and motive of the poet inevitably come into view; nor is there any pretence of disguising them. The Amír of Khurásán asked the minstrel Abú Zurá'a, "Can you make poetry like Rúdagí?" "My poetry is better than his," he replied, "but it needs thy bounty, for a poet becomes popular only when his patron regards him with favour"; then he said in verse:

Give me a thousandth part of the meed he gained,
And I will him outsing a thousandfold![4]

[1] A superb castle on the Euphrates, said to have been built by the Lakhmite prince, Nu'mán I (about A.D. 400).

[2] The Manichaeans attached great importance to calligraphy, and Máni (Manes) himself is believed by the Persians to have been an exquisite artist.

[3] *Lubáb*, II. 186, 1.

[4] *Ibid.* II. 10, 5.

One of the shortest articles in the *Lubáb* is that on Bihrúz-i Ṭabarí, which runs as follows:

"He says, complaining of the injustice of Fortune and the obscurity of the noble and the advancement of the base:

One word I'll say to thee; 'tis worth
Thy hearing, therefore hear it said!
None skilled in song remains on earth,
Because munificence is dead[1]."

A slight alteration in the well-known lines which Catullus addressed to Cicero makes them exactly fit the theory of poetry as expounded by Persian bards:

Tanto *optimus* omnium poeta
Quanto tu optimus omnium patronus.

Lest any one should suspect me of exaggerating, I will translate literally a passage which occurs in a *qaṣída* by Azraqí of Herát. He is addressing Sultan Ṭughánsháh ibn Muḥammad, the Seljúq.

If the power of Maḥmúd inspired the genius of 'Unṣurí
To produce those enchanting poems,
So must thy splendour inspire me; for in the scales of poesy
The ideas of the poets weigh less than a single mite.
'Tis praise of thee that causes me to think of beautiful expressions—
Not that their genius was gold and mine is clay[2].
If the cloud sucks up a drop of my mind (and then sends it down
in the shape of rain),
Parrot-heads will blossom from the bough instead of roses[3].

The patron, then, is the Muse of Persian court-poetry, and his inspiration is paid for in advance by the encomium which invokes it. Did he fail to respond, he was liable to be satirised as grossly as he was flattered before, so that he had every

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 67, 15.
[2] *I.e.* "I admit that the excellence of my poetry is wholly derived from my patron, but this was equally true of former poets and does not imply that I am inferior in genius to them."
[3] *Lubáb*, II. 103, 2. "Parrot-head" signifies fluent verse devoid of sense and wit. Azraqí means to say that his poetry would be worthless if it were merely the product of his own mind and were not inspired by his patron.

encouragement to behave with liberality. It may be urged that moral considerations should not enter into literary criticism, but this argument loses its force when the artistic form is influenced by a moral or immoral purpose. We take pleasure in well-turned compliments, without inquiring whether they are sincere or no, and the Persian panegyrists supply admirable examples of the kind. But in the encomium the claims of art are secondary: the poet cannot write to please himself; he must sing to his patron's tune. The more extravagant his laudation, the more turgid his rhetoric, and the more ingenious his flattery, the better chance he has of competing successfully with his rivals and securing a rich reward. Therefore extravagance, turgidity, and ingenuity are qualities belonging to the typical *qaṣída* since the Ghaznevid period, when it first became fully developed. Their combination with the stock-in-trade of conventional figures, phrases, epithets, assonances, and allusions—the raw material of all this poetry—produces a result which only Persian scholars can appreciate: to dress the *qaṣída* in another language is to leave it a shadow of its gorgeous self. With this advertisement, which is at once a warning to my readers and an apology to the poets in question, I will now render into prose or verse some of the less difficult panegyrics that 'Awfí has selected.

The following encomium by Mu'izzí is addressed to Niẓámu 'l-Mulk, the celebrated vizier of Sultan Maliksháh.

O thou who art praised like piety in the season of eld,
And O thou who art desired like pleasure in the season of youth!
Thou hast glorious ancestors to the time of Adam,
Thou wilt have blessed descendants to the Day of Resurrection.
The two hands of avarice have been tied by thy liberality,
The two eyes of tyranny have been put to sleep by thy justice.
Under thy protection the fawn drinks with the lion,
Through thy majesty the quail consorts with the eagle.
None ever descried the summit of the mountain of thy clemency,
None ever saw the bottom of the ocean of thy largesse.
The steed of thy purpose is always in battle,

The arrow of thy resolution is always speeding from the bow[1].
That man who in all his speech is most truthful,
If he utter one word to refute thee, becomes the greatest of liars.
Surely love of thee is Faith and hate of thee is Infidelity,
Since thy love and hate are mercy and torment to mankind[2].
Upon the waters of thine eye the heads of thy foes are turning;
Yea, when thine eye is a river, their heads are the water-wheel[3].
'Tis thy policy that keeps the world safe and sound:
Without thy policy, how would there be safety and soundness?
All people ask of thee, and thou answerest them—
May this asking and answering never come to an end!
The cords of the tent-pavilion of the Monarch's sway
Thy ambition hath drawn tight over East and West.
Last year, towards the West it lightened the rein;
This year, towards the East it is weighing down the stirrup.
This year it will cross the Oxus victoriously,
Even as last year it crossed the Euphrates and the Tigris.
When one looks deeply, 'tis from thy mind and thought have resulted
His marvellous and astonishing conquests throughout the world.
In sooth, the world is the sky, the King's conquests are the stars,
And thy mind and thought are the sun and the astrolabe[4].

## Panegyric on Ẓahíru'ddawla Abú Bakr, the Son of Niẓámu 'l-Mulk.

If the sphere of Heaven should dare dispute his sovereign will,
Beyond dispute the celestial ring would be snapped in twain.
His name strikes awe in the sky; the moon twice seven days old,
She rises to preach his praise, her pulpit the Milky Way;
And if he desire to set on his head a diadem,
The diadem for his rank and worth is the star 'Ayyúq!
His dagger brings to his foes their doom: well mightst thou say,
'Tis the foremost guard and the farthest post of the Angel Death.

[1] Reading نفاذ for بقای.

[2] "Heaven and Hell to mankind" would convey the poet's meaning more clearly.

[3] *I.e.* "If thy foes give thee cause to weep, thy tears are followed by swift vengeance which rolls their heads away (in the flood of tears), as the water-wheel is rolled (turned) by the river."

[4] *Lubáb*, II. 84, 17.

Oh, what a dagger! whose flame can turn the foemen's tide,
When strife is kindled and blazes high on the field of fray—
A flame so bitter, the choking fume of the fire thereof
From eye and mind of the ill-wisher parts nevermore.
When forth he flashes from out the heart of the host of love,
Strong beats the heart of his host to follow with hate the foe.
The world admires when his war-horse fleet, in panoply
Of iron mail, appears in the midst of the battle-plain.
What art shall serve me to picture him—that war-horse fleet?
He is like a ship, his bit the anchor, his hooves the sail;
And when he wheels at the gallop, he seems a glorious bride
With pearls and jewels and gold of his bridle-ornaments[1].
He lifts his head and o'er the arena charges on
With circling motion, like the majestic orb of Heaven.
He plants his foot on the earth and roars; as a cloud is he,
His bit the lightning thereof, his snort its thunder-clap.
Thou giv'st him rein, he is wind; thou hold'st him in, he is rock:
Methinks, his very marrow is made of these two things.
Yet who saw ever a rock that moves like a rushing wind,
Or who saw ever a wind whose form resembles a rock?
In onset he is the peer of Rakhsh and black Shabdíz;
Ẓahíru'ddawla, his rider, of Rustam and Chosroes—[2]
A prince revered: at his palace-gate the noblest men
Kneel, ere they knock, as 'twere the ring of the Ka'ba's door.
Even as the Sun in heaven lends to the moon his light,
So giveth light to the Sun his radiant piety.
Tho' Beauty's show in face and limb be a wondrous sight,
His virtue hid is fairer than all that Beauty shows;
Tho' Virtue ruling the inward man be a thing sublime,
His beauty's show is fairer than all that Virtue rules.
Tho' the sea be lavish of treasure and bountiful in its ways,
Yet his rich soul surpasses in bounteousness the sea[3].

(Mu'izzí.)

[1] This word-play, though not in the original, is quite in keeping with it.

[2] Rakhsh and Shabdíz were the favourite horses of Rustam and Khusrau Parwíz respectively.

[3] *Lubáb*, II. 77, 5.

PANEGYRIC ON THE VIZIER NAṢÍRU'DDÍN.

O'er the garden of his judgment never blew the wind of error,
On the page of his decision never lay the dust of weakness.
The geometers of wisdom must confess a thousand failures,
When they would survey the utmost length and breadth of his perfection.
Awe of him is deep-implanted in the heart and eye of monarchs,
Even as wine's assaulting fury in the nature of the drunken.
Oh, thy fine and subtle statecraft like the star Suhá is hidden,
Yet throughout the world 'tis famous, shining as the sun at noonday.
When the shrill sound of thy reed-pen charms away perplexed embroilments,
It might seem the voice of David tunefully the Psalms intoning.
'Neath the canopy of Heaven thy good nature is the censer
That doth fill the horizon's bosom full of fragrancy and perfume.
Round about the pale of Islam thy protection is the rampart
That defies the might of flaming Sirius to pass across it[1].

(Ẓahír of Fáryáb.)

Although the faults of this style are evident, while its compensating beauties disappear in translation, I should like to add one or two shorter specimens of the hyperbolical flattery on which the court-poets squander all the fancy and wit they command.

PRAISE OF SULTAN MAḤMÚD.

There's Fate in steel and silver, for thou hast
A silver signet and a sword of steel.
They say King Jamshíd ruled the world and saw
Before him man, beast, devil and peri kneel.
If so 'twas, either Jamshíd had *thy* power,
Or *thy* name stood on Jamshíd's magic seal[2].

('Unṣurí.)

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 300, 17. Sirius is said to be the only star that crosses the sky breadthwise (*Lisán*, VI. 84, 18).

[2] *Lubáb*, II. 32, 1.

PRAISE OF ABU 'L-ḤASAN 'ALÍ.

O thou whose courteous greeting
is like the long year's spring!
O thou whose gracious accents
are like a long life's youth!
The treasures of thy science
are that which hath no end,
The ocean of thy bounty
is that which hath no plumb.

If pearls of brilliant water
refresh the jaded spirit,
If ambergris pure-scented
makes the worn limbs seem young,
Then like to thy fine nature
is purest ambergris,
Like to thy peerless favour
are brilliant-water'd pearls[1].

(Abu 'l-Ma'álí of Rayy.)

PRAISE OF KING ABÚ NAṢR.

To his foes' night Heav'n brings no radiant day,
To his friends' rose Fate gives no wounding thorn.
His friends are high—but high upon a throne;
His foes are high—but high upon a gallows![2]

(Qaṭrán of Tabríz.)

I leave thy gate! And how should I depart,
When every breath I send into the air
Is charged with praise of thee? None may compare
With thee for skill to assay the poet's art:
Thou know'st as well as I, my coin rings fair.

I from thy bounty claim the bloodwit, since
My genius in this song gave up its soul.
Thou wilt not grudge to pay the appointed toll,
For 'twas desire to laud thee, O my Prince,
Bade o'er my tongue these golden verses roll![3]

('Imádí of Ghazna.)

That same desire was "the only begetter" of almost every *qaṣída* in the *Lubáb*. Their general features do not vary to any great extent and have been sufficiently illustrated by the extracts given above. Intellectual wit has free play in the panegyric, but a sense of humour is seldom allowed to inter-

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 231, 19. [2] *Ibid*. II. 220, 7. [3] *Ibid*. II. 261, 17.

fere with the solemn pose and ceremonious address which the patron's dignity demands. One of these rare exceptions is an ode by Jawharí of Herát, beginning:

Yesterday the imperial
A horse by old age stricken
head-groom to me presented
and crying out for mercy.

* * * * *

His back grown bare entirely
Cramfull and stuffed his stomach
The skin of his nose all puckered
His rump the cauldron, trembling
of flesh, as 'twere a coffin;
with straw, as 'twere a straw-barn.
like to a blacksmith's bellows;
from one leg to the other[1].

* * * * *

When briskly I approached him
He said, "Old ignoramus,
I am thy senior, pay me
'Tis want of reverence always
Ah, seest thou not how broken
My back a sore, my body
Art not ashamed to mount me?
On me into the mellay
I carried King Ṭahmúrath
When forth he marched to conquer
And I was in the Ark too
What time the world-wide Deluge
with saddle, bit, and bridle,
injurious, disrespectful!
the reverence I merit:
hath wrecked thy hopes of fortune.
am I by age and weakness?
a shadow, my head dizzy!
Or wilt thou ride unblushing
and wheel again for onset?
(quoth he) in the beginning,
and founded Marv-i Shahján;
in company with Noah,
was spreading waste and ruin[2].

* * * * *
* * * * *

Then came I to the Sultan,
For three and sixty years he
On thee he did bestow me:
Beg from the Sultan's stable
who showed me all due honour:
hath kept me in his stable.
if I take not thy fancy,
instead of me another!"[3]

The ode ends with a few lines equivalent to the English formula, "and thy petitioner will ever pray."

On the whole, we must allow that the difficulties and fatigues encountered in this field of Persian poetry are considerably greater than any pleasure that can be gained from

[1] *Lubáb*, II. 114, 16.
[2] *Ibid.* II. 115, 7.
[3] *Ibid.* II. 117, 1.

it. Its lack of truth and sincerity, the poverty of its ideas, and the shallowness of its sentiment leave at times an impression of disgust which the beautiful diction and brilliant imagery only serve to emphasise. Moreover, the style, pleasingly exotic at the best, in many passages becomes grotesque and ludicrous. Since I have tried to show that the work of the court-poets is not altogether unattractive, I may be pardoned for having selected such pieces as seemed to answer the purpose. Let me now justify my discretion by revealing the obstacles that would lie in the way of a more valorous translator. The chief of these is the fact that Persian poetry is largely composed of elements which are the very antithesis of what we in the West usually mean by the term "poetical"—elements which have long been regarded by us as destructive to poetry, though suitable enough for parody and other forms of light or humorous verse. This view, indeed, has not always prevailed. It was an English poet of the seventeenth century who wrote,

> No sires but these will poetry admit:
> Madness or wit;

and the definition is applicable to the lyrical poetry of Persia. As for madness, in the sense of divine enthusiasm, the odes written by Ṣúfís have plenty of it. The court-poets are not in the least mad, but they are immoderately witty. While we may agree that wit sometimes enters into alliance with poetical beauty and is even capable of adding an unexpected touch that contributes to its perfection, none of us would presuppose a natural and intimate connexion between the two. Persian criticism, however, does connect them; and in Persian poetry mere intellectual or verbal ingenuity, far from being a vice, is an admired ornament of style, albeit at some periods and by some poets it is used more sparingly than by the encomiasts who fill the pages of the *Lubáb* with clever fancies and quaint comparisons. The following specimens, which I have rendered literally, are easily understood and give but a slight notion of the feats accomplished by these Oriental euphuists.

The garden is full of strings of fresh pearls,
The hill-slopes are full of heaps of pure ambergris.
'Tis wind and cloud that gave to garden and hill-slope
Pure ambergris in heaps and fresh pearls in strings.
The raven is gone, the pheasant is come, and lo, a marvel!—
The earth like a pheasant's wing, the air like a raven's plume.
The grove hath become an altar, and the nightingale,
David-like, is singing psalms on the altar.
When the air donned mail and corslet of cloud,
The radiant sun made of his reflexion a bow.
Of rose-bud and willow-bough the zephyr
Made an emerald spear and a coral arrow.
See the poppies amongst the grass,
And amongst the poppies the tears of the cloud:
The grass like verdigris dashed with vermilion,
The poppies like vermilion dashed with quicksilver.
The tears of the cloud are rose-water, the blossoms camphor,
The water in the stream and rivulet is like sandal-wood[1].
Since the temperature of the world is not yet very hot,
Why are camphor, sandal-wood, and rose-water used as remedies
for it?[2]

(Mu'izzí.)

Here are the opening lines of a *qaṣída* by 'Am'aq of Bukhárá. "All the poets," says 'Awfí, "are unanimously of opinion that no one before him ever composed verses like these and that no one after him has been able to equal them."

If an ant utter speech and if a hair have life,
I am that speaking ant, I am that living hair.
My body is like the shadow of a hair, and my soul is like the eye
of an ant[3],
Because of the absence of her whose hair is fragrant with *gháliya*
and who hath an ant-like waist[4].

[1] Reading بفرغر instead of بعرعر.
[2] *Lubáb*, II. 82, 22.
[3] *I.e.* contracted with pain. "A narrow heart" means in Persian "an oppressed and sorrowful heart."
[4] *Lubáb*, II. 181, 11.

A little of this goes a long way. My last quotation is a lover's complaint, which occurs in the exordium of an ode by Abu 'l-Ma'álí.

I am not seeking diversion and I am not desiring pleasure,
I am not keeping patience and I am not getting sleep.
My tears, which have a resemblance to quicksilver,
Turn to pure gold when they trickle down my yellow cheeks.
By the tears of mine eye and the hue of my cheek
Natural philosophers are assured that quicksilver is the basis of gold[1].

[1] *Lubdb*, II. 229, 5.

# CHAPTER II

## THE MEDITATIONS OF MA'ARRÍ.

ما زلتَ فی الغمرات لستَ بخالصٍ
منهنّ فآشتُ علی رجآئك او قِطِ

Hope as thou wilt in heat or cold,
It matters not amidst the surge
Of woes that whelmed thee from of old
And whence thou never canst emerge.

ABU 'L-'ALÁ AL-MA'ARRÍ.

The name of Abu 'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí[1] is not one of those which any body of educated Moslems would be likely to receive with placid approbation or polite indifference; and readers of this essay will feel, though less acutely, that the words of the old blind poet, who died in Syria eight hundred and sixty years ago, ring out to-day as a challenge to deep and irreconcilable antagonisms in the nature of mankind. Is life to be desired or death? Is the world good or evil? Shall we enjoy it if we can or spurn it utterly? What is the truth about religion? Does it come to us from God, as the orthodox pretend? Are we to follow authority and tradition or reason and conscience? Such are some of the questions with which Ma'arrí concerns himself. While his reflections—not pursued methodically, but set down piecemeal and at intervals—

[1] The following books and articles may be mentioned in connexion with the subject of this study: A. von Kremer, *Die philosophische Gedichte des Abu 'l-'Alá* in the *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien* (Phil.-hist. Classe), vol. 117, 6th Abhandlung (Vienna, 1889); D. S. Margoliouth, *The Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá* (Oxford, 1898); *Abu 'l-'Alá's Correspondence on Vegetarianism* in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1902, p. 289 foll.; R. A. Nicholson, *The Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán by Abu 'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí* in the same Journal for 1900, pp. 637–720, and for 1902, pp. 75–101, 337–362, 813–847; Ṭá-há Ḥusayn, *Dhikrá Abi 'l-'Alá* (Cairo, 1915). The abbreviation *Luzúm* refers to the edition of the *Luzúmu má lá yalzam* published at Cairo in 1891.

might be described as extensive and peculiar, we must not exaggerate their intrinsic value. Von Kremer's essay, for which in general I have nothing but praise, seems to me to suffer from want of proportion. It hails Ma'arrí as an original thinker, centuries in advance of his age, and discusses his theory and practice as though he were a philosopher writing in verse. Without denying that Ma'arrí was a pioneer of *Aufklärung*, or that his open-minded and independent way of looking at things led him to conclusions which often agree with those of modern thought, I submit that Von Kremer has put the cart before the horse. Ma'arrí is, first of all and essentially, a poet. His philosophy and ethics are only a background for his poetry. His work is artistic in treatment and execution and should be weighed by the standard which we apply to the *Divina Commedia* or the *Paradise Lost*. He sits below Dante and Milton, but he belongs to their school; and if he contemplates life with the profound feeling of Lucretius, he handles his subject with a literary skill as fine as that of Horace. Probably very few Europeans have read these poems, the *Luzúmiyyát*, from beginning to end. I am sure that any one who has accomplished the feat, or may do so in the future, will acknowledge the author's mastery of the Arabic language—a mastery which too frequently displays itself in juggling with words—the aptness of his diction, the force and opulence of his imagery, the surprising turns of his fancy, and the charm of a style unmistakably his own, whose melancholy dirge-like cadences blend with sharper notes of wit, satire, and epigram. The matter is almost as remarkable as the style. Ma'arrí aims at telling the truth, although according to Moslem theory poets not only are but ought to be liars. Taking Reason for his guide, he judges men and things with a freedom which must have seemed scandalous to the rulers and privileged classes of the day. Amidst his meditations on the human tragedy a fierce hatred of injustice, hypocrisy, and superstition blazes out. Vice and folly are laid bare in order that virtue and wisdom may be sought. In his poetry we see the age depicted without fear or favour, and—what is more appealing—the artist himself, struggling

with doubts, yet confident in the power of mind to solve difficulties and give light, if any can be looked for. But (lest I slip after Von Kremer) much of the *Luzúm* is monotonous; a great deal is trivial and pedantic and to our taste intolerably clever: it moves us to admiration and contempt, it thrills, fatigues, fascinates, and repels; and when all has been said, it remains unique and immortal because it expresses the personality of an extraordinary man.

Abu 'l-'Alá Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallah al-Ma'arrí[1] was born in A.D. 973 at Ma'arra (Ma'arratu 'l-Nu'mán), a country-town in the district south of Aleppo[2]. His family might boast of its cadis and poets, but its talents appear to have been more respectable than brilliant. The fact that neither his father nor his cousin nor his maternal uncle ever made the pilgrimage to Mecca is worth recording in view of the importance which he ascribes to example and custom in the formation of religious belief. Ere he was four years old, he suffered the first calamity of his life: an attack of small-pox left him partially, and soon completely, blind. After his father's death—he was then about fourteen—he devoted himself to study, visiting Aleppo, Antioch, and other Syrian towns, learning by heart the manuscripts preserved in their libraries, and attending the lectures of many celebrated scholars. As Professor Margoliouth remarks, his memory was prodigious. We can hardly conceive how one who so early lost his sight should have been able to compose letters and treatises thickly sown with quotations which, although they are sometimes inaccurate, show a knowledge of Arabic poetry and philology such as the most industrious grammarians seldom possessed. Having finished his studies, he returned in A.D. 993 to Ma'arra, perhaps with the intention of becoming a professional poet, that is to say, a writer of panegyrics for which he might reckon upon being paid handsomely. This

[1] Abu 'l-'Alá is his "name of honour" (*kunya*), Aḥmad what we should call his "Christian name," and 'Abdallah the name of his father.

[2] I have compiled this sketch from the biography given by Professor Margoliouth in his introduction to the *Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, which supplies full information concerning the poet's life together with many details of historical and literary interest.

was no career for a man of spirit and honour to embark on. If it tempted him, he soon put it aside: in the preface to his first collection of poems he says that he never wrote encomia for money, but only because he wished to gain practice in the art. During the next fifteen years (A.D. 993–1008) his whole income was a pension of about 30 dínárs which his blindness compelled him to share with a servant; possibly he may have earned a little more by teaching. Meanwhile he was making a reputation beyond the borders of his native town, and his thoughts turned to Baghdád, "the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind had the fullest scope and the highest encouragement[1]." In 1008 he set out from Aleppo, travelling down the Euphrates in a boat provided by his uncle. It seems clear that he hoped to establish himself permanently in the capital; and he ought to have counted the cost of his refusal to live by belauding the great. "I found Baghdád," he says, "like a pie's wing—fair, but carrying nothing[2]." While his reception by the savants and academicians whom he met there was flattering enough to console him for occasional slights, and perhaps friendly enough to procure him the means of livelihood, he felt that his prospects were uncertain. According to Professor Margoliouth, an indignity put upon him by the brother of the Sharíf al-Raḍí was the last straw. Anyhow, eighteen months after entering Baghdád he started on his way home[3]. He took this step reluctantly and always writes of it with unfeigned regret, as in the following lines:

يا لهف نفسى علىٍ انّى رجعتُ الى * هذى البلاد ولم اهلـكْ ببغداذا
اذا رأيـتُ امـوراً لا تـوافـقنـى * قلتُ الايابُ الى الاوطان أدّى ذا

How sad that I returned, how sad,
Instead of dying at Bagdad!
I say, whene'er things fall amiss,
"My coming home hath brought me this."[4]

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ch. 3.

[2] *The Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, p. 37.

[3] He himself said afterwards that he left Baghdád for two reasons: his poverty and the illness of his mother. Her death, which took place before he reached Ma'arra, was a heavy blow to him.

[4] *Luzúm*, I. 303, 5.

The sense of disillusion and failure with which he quitted Baghdád appears in a letter addressed to the people of Ma'arra shortly before his arrival amongst them. He declares that he has now ended his youth and bidden farewell to his spring-time, and that he finds the best course for him to pursue is to go into retreat.

"My soul did not consent to my returning till I had promised it three things—seclusion as complete as that of (the star) al-Faníq in the constellation of the Bull; separation from the world like that of the egg-shell from the chick; and to remain in the city even though the inhabitants fled through fear of the Greeks.... What I wanted was to stay in a place of learning: and I found out the most precious of spots, but fate did not allow me to stay there, and only a fool will quarrel with destiny[1]."

Here is pessimism, asceticism, fatalism—the stuff of which his later poems are made. It would be curious if their rationalism, another prime ingredient, owed nothing to the "intellectuals" of Baghdád. Considered broadly in relation to the poet's development, these two years (1008–9) were decisive. The change of scene, the sudden plunge into metropolitan society, the literary discussions, the conversations with men of all races and creeds, the conflict of old dogmas and new ideas, then the wreck of his hopes and the burial of his ambitions in silence and solitude—need we ask whether such an experience did not stimulate his genius and alter the bent of his mind? From this standpoint the episode was entirely fortunate. Had he not gone to Baghdád, probably the *Luzúmiyyát* would never have been written, and (in Europe at any rate) his fame as a poet would be very different from what it is.

Ma'arrí lived in retirement until his death in A.D. 1058, fifty years later. Proud, sensitive, and suspicious, doubly imprisoned by blindness and seclusion[2], a misanthropic and world-weary old man—that is the character which his poems

[1] Margoliouth, *op. cit.* p. 43 fol.

[2] He refers to himself as "the twice-bound captive" (*rahnu 'l-maḥbasayn*). See *The Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, p. 1.

give of him; but a true portrait shows light as well as shade. To quote Professor Margoliouth,

> the result of his visit to Baghdád, where the leading writers of the time had treated him as one of themselves, became apparent as soon as he came back. Disciples began to flock to Ma'arra from all quarters to hear his lectures on the grammar, poetry, and antiquities of the Arabs. The house or cave which he inhabited became the chief sight in Ma'arra, and he himself the most important inhabitant....The letters, most of which were written after the return from Baghdád, exhibit the author as anything but a hermit; he appears rather as a man of many friends, who takes a kindly interest both in men and things.

Besides teaching, he occupied his mind with composing the *Luzúmiyyát* and dictating to his amanuenses a large number of philological and other works of which, for the most part, the titles alone have been preserved.

The poetry of Ma'arrí recalls a long-drawn controversy, which has never wholly died out, between two schools of Islamic criticism. One party maintained that with the coming of Islam the golden age of Arabic poetry had gone for ever. A poet's rank was decided by his date. To have lived in that age, to have spoken the pure Bedouin idiom uncontaminated by foreign conquests, to have practised the traditional virtues and to have been inspired by the chivalrous ideals of heathendom conferred a superiority outweighing every other consideration. In the eyes of early Mohammedan philologists and antiquarians—whose authority rested securely on the universal respect for learning and was but little diminished by their incompetence in matters of taste—the pagan odes fixed an unapproachable standard by which all Moslem poets should be judged; so that an imitation of them, good or bad, was more highly esteemed than any original work of genius. Pedantry, no doubt; but in justice to those old scholars we ought to reflect that they were concerned with one particular type of poetry, the Ode (*qaṣída*), which was the product of Arabian antiquity and corresponded in its characteristic features to conditions

of life that actually existed in the pre-Islamic period[1]. When these conditions vanished, the *qaṣída* became an anachronism but continued to be the chief medium of poetical expression, since none of the minor types was capable of filling its place. Failing the invention of a new form of equal dignity, the *qaṣída* held the field. What was a modern poet to do? Was he to assume the consecrated pose of bidding his two comrades halt awhile and weep with him over a certain camping-ground, desolate now, but still haunted by dear and regretful memories? And was he to describe the hardships, which he had never known, of a journey across the desert, and pretend to be as intimately acquainted with camels, horses, wild asses, antelopes, and lizards as he truly was with the rhymed *loci classici* in which the habits of these animals are so well delineated? If, on the other hand, like Mutanabbí and Ma'arrí, he made fun of the obsolete fashions and re-shaped them to suit the facts of his time, academic persons might (and did) protest that his more or less novel adaptation was not poetry at all. It appears to me that those who championed the ancients were both right and wrong. They were right in preferring the model to the copy. They were wrong when they set it up as a test of all poetic values and declared it to be so perfect that nothing of a different kind could bear comparison with it. To assert that since A.D. 622 there has been no Arabic poet of the first class is ridiculous; and though more great poets lived in the century before Islam than in any subsequent period of the same duration, I think it may reasonably be questioned whether Imra'u 'l-Qays and his fellows are superior in genius to Abú Nuwás, Mutanabbí, and others who flourished under the 'Abbásid Caliphate[2]. If some cannot admire the ancients without depreciating the moderns, not a few will justify the proud boast of Ma'arrí—

وإنّى وإن كنتُ الاخيرَ زمانُهُ * لآتٍ بما لم تستطعه الاوائلُ

And I, albeit I come in Time's late hour,
Achieve what lay not in the ancients' power[3].

[1] What follows refers to the Arabic *qaṣída*, not to the Persian type which has been described and illustrated in Chap. I.

[2] Cf. Nöldeke's judgment concerning Abú Nuwás (*Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der alten Araber*, p. 3).

[3] *Saqṭu 'l-Zand* (Búláq, A.H. 1286), I. 110, 20.

For my part, when I turn from the authors of the *Mu'allaqát* to the great Islamic poets, I do not miss what I do not expect to find; and I find beauties enough in both to compensate me for the deficiencies of either. Thanks mainly to Rückert and Sir Charles Lyall, the worth of old Arabian poetry is now understood everywhere. Let us hope the day is coming when it will be possible to make that statement as regards Arabic poetry in general.

What has been said of Coleridge, that "his poems lie as it were in two strata," is also true of Ma'arrí. Those of his first manner, the odes comprised in the *Saqṭu 'l-Zand* and mostly written before the age of thirty-five, show the influence of his admiration for Mutanabbí and in comparison with the *Luzúmiyyát* are nearly as conventional as the poems written by Coleridge before 1797. They include some fine panegyrics and elegies but have small interest for us. In the East, however, the *Saqṭu 'l-Zand* has always been more popular than the *Luzúm*, which Mohammedans usually dislike on account of the opinions put forth in it, while neither its form nor its character accords with their notion of what poetry ought to be. As we have seen, the regular type of Arabic poetry is the ode; but in the *Luzúm* Ma'arrí discards this time-honoured model, substituting for it an informal composition which may contain any number of verses from two or three to eighty or ninety. How these poems strike the average Moslem we can learn from the apology which Ma'arrí thinks it necessary to make for them. He says in effect[1]:

"I have not sought to embellish my verse by means of fiction or fill my pages with love idylls, battle-scenes, descriptions of wine-parties and the like. My aim is to speak the truth. Now, the proper end of poetry is not truth, but falsehood[2], and in proportion as it is diverted from its proper end its perfection is impaired. Therefore I must crave the indulgence of my readers for this book of *moral* poetry."

1 Preface to the *Luzúm*, pp. 9 and 42.

2 "Usu receptum est in poesi ignauum se fortem iactare, castum sectatoris mulierum uestes induere, et debilem se ornare cultu uiri acris atque audacis" (from the preface to the *Saqṭu 'l-Zand*, translated by Rieu, *De Abul-Alae uita et carminibus*, p. 36). Cf. the current saying, "The most agreeable poetry is the most false" (اعذب الشعر اكذبه). Ma'arrí quotes

In other words, Ma'arrí holds that truth—he means moral and philosophical truth—so far from being the standard of poetical merit, is positively injurious to it. He does not imply that the best poetry is untrue to life, but rather that it is false because it follows human life and nature, which belong to the vanities of this world and are themselves radically false. He knows that he cannot compete with his "profane" brethren who are free to employ all the resources of invention and imagination; and foreseeing that his readers will be disappointed, he hastens to assure them that the fault lies in the subject, not in the poet. A Mohammedan scholar, who in his recently published memoir of Ma'arrí has made a valuable contribution to learning, cites this passage as evidence that the *Luzúm* is really "a volume of philosophy[1]." If that were so, we might ask why the author not only composed it in verse but adopted an almost incredibly difficult form of rhyme, the explanation of which gives his preface the appearance of a treatise on prosody. But I need not argue the point further. Ma'arrí says that the *Luzúm* is "diction devoid of falsehood" (قولٌ عرِيٌّ من المَيْن), *i.e.*, poetry of an inferior kind.

from al-Aṣma'í "Poetry is one of the gates (categories) of vanity," and he might have added that poets were called liars by Mohammed (Koran, 26, 226). The following extracts from Ṣuyúṭí's *Muzhir* (Búláq, A.H. 1282, vol. II. p. 234 fol.; *Thornton's Arabic Series: Second Reading Book*, Cambridge, 1909, p. 21 fol.) show the view of many good Moslems on this subject: "There are certain conditions which must be fulfilled before any one is called a poet. If his object were to speak the truth without exaggerating or going beyond the mark or lying or relating things absolutely impossible, although his work might be faultless in metre, it would have no value (as poetry), and the name of poet would not be given to him. It was said by a man of acute mind that gay poetry raises a laugh, while grave poetry is fiction: therefore the poet has no choice but to tell lies or to make people laugh; and such being the case, Allah has preserved His Prophet from these two qualities (*i.e.* Mohammed was not a poet, as his enemies alleged) and from everything ignoble.... Some one may observe that now and then wisdom is found in poetry, according to the Prophet's saying, 'Truly, there is in eloquence a magic and in poetry a wisdom.' I reply, 'For the reason which we have mentioned, Allah preserved him from poetising; and as for wisdom, Allah has bestowed on him the largest and amplest portion thereof in the Koran and the Sunna.'"

[1] *Dhikrá Abi 'l-'Alá*, by Dr Ṭá-há Ḥusayn (Cairo, 1915), p. 284.

We who dissent from his theory judge otherwise of his work. Although moral, religious, and philosophical ideas are not the essence of poetry, they have inspired the greatest poets, and where genius is equal they will turn the scale. Whether and to what extent they enhance the merit of a poem depends on the author's power to give them artistic and original expression: the most striking doctrines and speculations may have less value for this purpose than thoughts and feelings with which everyone is familiar. Von Kremer's view of Ma'arrí led him to ignore the latter element; hence the passages which he translated stand somewhat apart, so to speak, from the main themes. These are simple and even commonplace: the pain of life, the peace of death, the wickedness and folly of mankind, the might of Fate and the march of Time, the emptiness of ambition, the duty of renunciation, the longing for solitude and then—to rest in the grave. The pessimism of the *Luzúm* wears the form of an intense pervading darkness, stamping itself on the mind and deeply affecting the imagination[1]. It is an old philosophy and its poets have been many, but I can think of none who in sincerity, individuality, and eloquence has surpassed Abu 'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí[2].

The book derives its title from a "troublesome bondage" (to borrow Milton's phrase) voluntarily imposed on himself by the author in regard to the rhyme[3]. Although the nature of this cannot be explained properly without using technical

[1] His pessimism as regards his contemporaries is not absolute, for the succeeding age will be worse (*Luzúm*, II. 171, 17). He admits that life on the balance may be neither gain nor loss (I. 230, 10), but from all his experience of the world he can produce, so far as I remember, only one verse which is positively optimistic (II. 245, 8): "If this year bestow the minimum of comfort, I hope for its maximum next year."

[2] Ma'arrí has been compared with his celebrated predecessor Abu 'l-'Atáhiya (see my *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 296 foll.). Since both preach asceticism, their poems naturally have much in common, but Abu 'l-'Atáhiya writes in a relatively orthodox religious spirit which quite lacks the breadth and freedom of Ma'arrí's philosophical outlook. The one is a Moslem, the other a citizen of the world. And the style of the *Luzúm*, though less easy, is far superior in force and originality.

[3] The words *Luzúmu má lá yalzam* signify "The obligation of that which is not obligatory."

terms which I wish to avoid, the so-called "rich rhymes" of French versification are a close parallel and will serve to illustrate what is meant. Conceive a French poem of ten, fifteen, or twenty verses, every verse having not only the same rhyme but the same consonant preceding the rhyme-vowel, *e.g.*, *plume, allume, enclume; mirage, enrage, ouvrage, parage*; further, conceive hundreds of poems rhymed throughout in this manner and arranged according to the alphabetical sequence of the final consonant, so that those with the rhyme *lume* are placed under *m*, those with the rhyme *rage* under *g*, and so on—the analogy, such as it is, may help readers ignorant of Arabic to measure the enormous labour which the composition of the *Luzúmiyyát* must have entailed. There is nothing like it, of course, in any European language; even in Arabic, a language that seems to have been made for virtuosity, we find only a few brief and isolated specimens to set beside it[1]. Were Ma'arrí a minor poet, the *Luzúm* would be a senseless *tour de force*. Some of it is not very remote from that description, and the tyranny of the rhyme exacts a crushing toll of repetition, monotony, banality, obscurity, and affectation. Still, take it all in all, the work is shaped by the artist, not by the mould which it fills slowly and reluctantly. I do not think so poorly of his powers as to believe, with some Mohammedan and European critics, that the difficulty of the form compelled him to say what he never would have said if he had been his own master. No doubt, he is apt to be dragged down by his chains, but often he can move in them with such dexterity and ease that they appear rather an ornament than a hindrance.

The *Luzúm* contains 1592 poems amounting, I suppose, to between twelve and thirteen thousand verses altogether. When the author declares that they glorify God, exhort the heedless, and warn against the vanity and wickedness of the

[1] Ma'arrí did not invent this form of versification: it was used by the Umayyad poet Kuthayyir (*ob.* A.D. 723) in the first ten verses of an ode (*Aghání*, 8, 39). He describes himself as an imitator of Kuthayyir. Cf. *Luzúm*, II. 265, penult., where he says, كثيّرٌ انا فى حرفى.

world[1], he does not indicate either the range of their topics or the variety of their style. He was interested in many things besides asceticism: he was a keen student of passing events, he professed to know his contemporaries by heart[2], and we shall see how political and social phenomena reflect themselves in his meditations. Recalling his avowed intention to tell the truth, one may find there the best commentary on his way of telling it. For him Truth was a mystery—

> And Falsehood like a star all naked stands,
> But Truth still hides her face 'neath hood and veil[3].

By hard living and thinking he strove to lift that veil, and the laboured utterance, the dark hints and metaphors—in short, the oracular quality of his verse—are only in keeping with the physical and mental strain which he had undergone. Closer acquaintance with the *Luzúm* has persuaded me that its obscurity is more natural and less deliberate than I once imagined. Ma'arrí had good reason to cloak some of his opinions, and being a sensible as well as a cautious man, he did not court persecution, though in fact the most heretical passages of his work are by no means the most obscure. Apart from special causes his style, as I said before, is the expression of a strange untempered personality[4], while in the

[1] Preface, p. 9: فمنها ما هو تمجيد لله ... وبعضها تذكير للناسين وتنبيه للرقدة الغافلين وتحذير من الدنيا الكبرى التى عبثت بالاوّل الخ

[2] *Luzúm*, I. 230, penult.

ومن تأمّل اقوالى رأى جُمَلًا
يظلّ فيهنّ سِرّ الناس مشروحا

"Whoever peruses my poems will observe sentences in which the inmost thoughts of men are revealed." Cf. II. 27, 2, where he ranks himself with those who have the greatest knowledge of men.

[3] *Luzúm*, I. 358, 2. In this verse, however, the words "truth" and "falsehood" are synonymous with "right" and "wrong." Cf. I. 339, 9: "As for Right (*hudá*), I have found it a secret amongst us, but Wrong (*ḍalál*) is openly seen."

[4] Writing to his uncle, Abu 'l-Qásim, he says: "As you know, though born a man, I am like a wild animal in character" (وحشىّ الغريزة انسىّ الولادة).

second place it is the product of a poet who seldom allows us to forget that he was also a very learned scholar. His love of grammar, prosody, rhetoric, and belles-lettres asserts itself extravagantly; some poems are mere strings of word-plays. This feature spoils many pages for us, but it is not invariable, as will be acknowledged by those who read the Arabic text of the poems translated below. These, though representative as regards the author's ideas, are comparatively plain in style and include no example of what he could do when he ran to the opposite extreme.

Following Sir Charles Lyall, a master in the art, I have sometimes tried to imitate the original metres without the monorhyme, which in a language like ours lays too heavy a burden upon the translator. Arabic metres being quantitative, their equivalents in a modern European tongue are necessarily imperfect. It is not possible to reproduce the movement and cadence of the *Luzúmiyyát* except in the same way as the movement and cadence of the Iliad are reproduced, or rather suggested, by a version in English hexameters; yet, shadowy as the resemblance is, it conveys something of real value, which is more easily felt than described. Like the broken vase in Moore's song, these Oriental rhythms have a perfume that "clings to them still." More than that we dare not hope for: even when transplanted by skilful hands they lose the best of their beauty and never become quite acclimatised.

I have thought it well to give the names and schemes of the four principal metres for the sake of those who do not know them already, together with specimens in Arabic, Latin, and English. It will be observed that the Latin renderings are weightier than the English, because (coinciding in this respect with the originals) they are based on quantity instead of accent. Besides weight, however, Arabic has a peculiar sonority which Latin does not possess in the same degree and which is greatly increased by the recurring monorhyme.

1. *Ṭawíl* (the Long Metre).

Scheme: ⏑ – ⏓ | ⏑ – ⏓ – | ⏑ – ⏓ | ⏑ – ⏑ –

*yadullu ʻalá faḍli 'l-mamáti wa-kawnihí*
*iráḥata jism[in] 'anna maslakahú ṣaʻbu.*
*'alam tara 'anna 'l-majda talqáka dúnahú*
*shadá'idu min 'amthálihá wajaba 'l-ruʻbu*[1].

bono qui negat summo frui nisi mortuos
habet testimonium hoc: iter mortis arduum est.
uides ut priusquam uir sibi uindicauerit
honorem, pati casus timendos oporteat.

That Death is a good supreme and gives to the body peace
From all sorrow—prove it thus: the way thereunto is hard.
For seest thou not, before success in a high emprise,
What sore straits encounter thee, what perils thou needs must fear?

Here the Latin and English versions exhibit the usual form of the *Ṭawíl* metre, while the Arabic lines are a less common variation, in which ⏑ – – – is substituted for ⏑ – ⏑ – in the last foot of the verse, *i.e.*, the foot containing the rhyme[2]. Another variety shortens the same foot by omitting the final syllable, thus:

bono qui negat summo frui nisi mortuos
habet testimonium hoc: iter mortis atrox.
uides ut pati casus timendos oporteat,
honorem priusquam uir sibi uindicârit.

That Death is a good supreme and gives to the body peace
From all sorrow—here is proof: the hardness of dying.
For seest thou not, before success in a high emprise,
What perils thou needs must fear, what sore straits encounter?

[1] *Luzúm*, I. 79, 7.

[2] The Arabic "verse" (*bayt*) consists of two hemistichs. In the passage transliterated above there are two verses, ending with the rhyme-words *ṣaʻbu* and *ruʻbu*.

2. *Basíṭ* (the Wide Metre).

Scheme: ⏑ – ◡ – | ⏑ ◡ – | ⏑ – ◡ – | ⏑⏑ –

*'ammá 'idhá má da'a 'l-dá'í li-makrumat$^{in}$*
*fa-hum qalíl$^{un}$ wa-lákin fi 'l-'adhá ḥushudu*[1].

quos si uocaueris ad praeclara, conueniunt
rari, sed iniuriae ergo tota gens properat.

As often as they are called to do a kindness, they come
By twos and threes; but to work despite they muster in crowds.

*ṭúbá li-maw'údat$^{in}$ fí ḥáli mawlidihá*
*ẓulm$^{an}$ fa-layta 'abáha 'l-faẓẓa maw'údu*[2].

beata quam sepeliuit filiam genitor
uiuam; atque sic utinam sepultus ipse foret!

Oh, happy she that was tombed alive the hour she was born,
And would that he had been tombed, her ruthless sire, at his birth!

3. *Wáfir* (the Ample Metre).

Scheme: ◡ – ⏑⏑ – | ◡ – ⏑⏑ – | ◡ – –

*wa-lam 'aridi 'l-maniyyata bi-'khtiyárí*
*wa-lákin 'awshaka 'l-fatayáni saḥbí*[3].

et haud equidem uolens Acheronta adiui:
ephebi me truces duo ui trahebant.

Not willingly went I down to the fated waters:
The two strong youths[4] by force haled me between them.

4. *Kámil* (the Perfect Metre).

Scheme: ⏑⏑ – ◡ – | ⏑⏑ – ◡ – | ⏑⏑ – ◡ –

*dunyáka dár$^{un}$ 'in yakun shuhháduhá*
*'uqalá'a lá yabkú 'alá ghuyyábihá*[5].

hic mundus est tibi tale deuersorium
malesanus ut sit qui profectos lugeat.

This world is such an abode that if those present here
Have their wits entire, they will never weep for the absent ones.

[1] *Luzúm*, I. 248, 3. [2] *Ibid.* I. 254, 6. [3] *Ibid.* I. 136, 8.
[4] Day and Night. [5] *Luzúm*, I. 142, last line.

Notwithstanding that a single poem may touch upon many topics, it seemed convenient to group the translations as far as possible under the following general heads:

I. Life and Death.
II. Human Society.
III. Asceticism.
IV. Philosophy and Religion.

This arrangement has the advantage of distributing the contents of the work in something like their due order and proportion, and of helping the reader to judge it as a whole more fairly than from the extracts published by Von Kremer, which are not so numerous or representative as mine; but I confess that I have with difficulty resisted the temptation to show how fine and original a poet Ma'arrí is by gathering his best pieces into one garland. The poems in the first three sections offer a wide survey of his theory, practice, and experience of life. While their figurative language may sometimes require explanation, I do not think they call for a preliminary statement of the philosophical ideas which lie beneath. We can understand and enjoy them without knowing how Ma'arrí conceived of God, fate, time, space, spirit, and matter. What he has to say about these and other subjects—the influence of the stars, the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of transmigration, the nature of religion, etc.—particularly excites our curiosity, and many will consider that it is the quintessence of his poetry; as a rule, however, it occurs only in brief passages which must be taken out of their context and examined side by side before we can draw any sure evidence from them. That is the task I have attempted in the fourth section, where the author's philosophy and his attitude towards positive religion will be discussed.

## I.

### Life and Death.

(1)

In the casket of the Hours
Events deep-hid
Wait on their guardian Powers
To raise the lid.

And the Maker infinite,
Whose poem is Time,
He need not weave in it
A forced stale rhyme.

The Nights pass so,
Voices dumb,
Without sense quick or slow
Of what shall come[1].

*  *  *  *  *

By Allah's will preserving
From misflight,
The barbs of Time unswerving
On us alight.

A loan is all he gives
And takes again;
With his gift happy lives
The folly of men[2].

(2)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*, with variations.)

Would that a lad had died in the very hour of birth
And never sucked, as she lay in childbed, his mother's breast!
Her babe, it says to her or ever its tongue can speak,
"Nothing thou gett'st of me but sorrow and bitter pain."[3]

[1] Time is not a conscious agent which can be described as moving quickly or slowly: it is the passive environment in which events appear. Cf. No. 225 and *Luzúm*, II. 273, 9: "Time is silent, but its events interpret it aloud, so that it seems to speak."

[2] I. 67, 4.

[3] I. 63, 6.

( 3 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

This world, O my friend, is like a carcase unsepulchred,
And we are the dogs that yelp around it on every side.
A loser is he, whoso advances to eat thereof;
A gainer is he, whoso returns from it hungry still.
If any be not waylaid by calamities in the night,
Some ill hap of Time is sure to meet him at morningtide[1].

( 4 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

The soul feels a shock of pain, when Time's thunderbolt o'erwhelms
With ruin; a thrill of joy, when softly he sings to her[2];
And whence are the paths for us prepared that our feet may fall,
She knows not, or where the beds ordained that we lay our sides.
These Hours, they seem as snakes of black and of white colure[3],
So deadly, the fingers lack all boldness in touching them.
Mankind are the breaths, I ween, of Earth: one is upward borne
To us, whilst in ebbing wave another returns to dust.
I drank it, my forty years' existence, and gulped it down,
But ah, what a bitter draught! and nowise it did me good.
We live ignorant and die in errancy as we lived:
Besotted with wickedness, a man turns not back again[4].

( 5 )

Ye stand still beneath Heaven
Whose wheels by Force are driven;
And choose in freedom while
The Fates look on and smile[5].

( 6 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

They mustered for setting out, 'twas a morn of promise:
"Now surely," they said, "a rain on the land is fallen."
Mayhap those weather-wise who observe the lightning

[1] I. 224, 10.

[2] Cf. I. 265, last line: "The deceiving World sang to thee, and thy love of her was a lute in her hand."

[3] Time with its nights and days is represented as a serpent having alternate bands of black and white. Cf. No. 24, last verse, and No. 84, verse 3.

[4] II. 77, 10.

[5] I. 332, 3.

Shall perish before they win of it any bounty.
The folk ofttimes are saved in a land of famine,
The fruitful and rich champaign may destroy its people[1].

(7)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*, with variations.)

'Tis God's will a man should live in torment and tribulation,
Until those that know him cry, "He hath paid now the lifelong debt."
Give joy to his next of kin on the day of his departure,
For they gain a heritage of riches, and he of peace[2].

(8)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

The greatest of all the gifts of Time is to give up all:
Whate'er he bestows on thee, his hand is outstretched to seize.
More excellence hath a life of want than a life of wealth,
And better than monarch's fine apparel the hermit's garb.
I doubt not but Time one day will raise an event of power
To scatter from Night's swart brow her clustering Pleiades.
Ere Noah and Adam, he the twins of the Lesser Bear
Unveiled: they are called not yet amongst bears grown grey and old.
Let others run deep in talk, preferring this creed or that,
But mine is a creed of use: to hold me aloof from men.
Methinks, on the Hours we ride to foray as cavaliers:
They speed us along like mares of tall make and big of bone.
What most wears Life's vesture out is grief which a soul endures,
Unable to bring once back a happiness past and gone[3].

(9)

O Death! be thou my guest: I am tired of living,
And I have tried both sorts in joy and sorrow.
My morrow shall be my yesterday, none doubts it;
My yesterday nevermore shall be my morrow[4].

[1] I. 93, 2.
[2] I. 69, penult.
[3] I. 123, 10.
[4] I. 286, penult.

( 10 )

Perish this world! I should not joy to be
Its Caliph or Maḥmúd[1].
My fate I know not, save that I in turn
Am treading the same path to the same bourne
As old 'Ád and Thamúd[2].
The mountains ('tis averred) shall melt, the seas
Surely shall freeze;
And the great dome of Heaven, whose poles
Have ever awed men's souls,
Some argue for its ruin, some maintain
Its immortality—in vain?[3]
The scattered boulders of the lava waste,
Shall e'er they mingle into one massed ore?[4]
If sheer catastrophe shall fling in haste
The Pleiad luminaries asunder,
Well may be quenched the fiery brand of Mars;
And if decay smites Indian scimitars,
Survival of their sheaths would be a wonder![5]

( 11 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

O child of a tender mother—and surely Allah
Is able to bring to pass whatsoe'er He pleaseth—
Thou after thy death, destroyed by the hap most hateful,
Yet speakest and warnest us with a voice of wisdom.
"Unwilling" (thou sayst) "in this world I alighted
And lived; and how oft was medicined, how oft was potioned!
A year, month after month, I made by climbing—
And would I had never climbed on the new moons' ladder!
And when I was called away and my hour of weaning[6]
Drew nigh, Death sought me out and I found no warder.

[1] Sultan Maḥmúd of Ghazna died in A.D. 1030, twenty-eight years before the death of Ma'arrí.

[2] Extinct aboriginal tribes: the legend of their destruction is told in the Koran.

[3] Cf. No. 220.

[4] Literally, "Shall silver (*fiḍḍat*) one day be made to prevail over lava (*fiḍḍat*), so that the stones of the latter shall become like an ingot?"

[5] I. 262, 3. The "scimitars" represent the stars and planets, which are "sheathed" by the celestial spheres.

[6] Separation from the world.

Life's house I abandoned, empty, to other tenants,
And wretched I must have been had I still remained there.
I went forth pure, unsoiled: had my lease of living
Been long, I had soilure ta'en and had lost my pureness.
Oh, why dost thou weep? It may be that I am chosen
To dwell with the blessed souls in the state hereafter.
'Gainst evil the women charmed me, but when my day dawned,
It left me as though I ne'er had been charmed by charmers.
Suppose I had lived as long as the vulture, only
To meet Death at the last: I had either suffered
The poor man's wrong, oppressed without fear of Allah,
Or else I had been a ruler of men who feared me.
'Tis one of the boons my Lord hath bestowed upon me,
That hastily I departed and did not tarry."[1]

( 12 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

The sage looketh in the glass of Reason, but he that makes
His brethren his looking-glass will see truth, mayhap, or lies[2].
And I, shall I fear the pain of Allah, when He is just,
And though I have lived the life of one wronged and racked with pain?
Yes: each hath his portioned lot; but men in their ignorance
Would mend here the things they loathe that never can mended be[3].

( 13 )

Nor birth I chose nor old age nor to live:
What the Past grudged me shall the Present give?
Here must I stay, by Doom's both hands constrained,
Nor go until my going is ordained.
You who would guide me out of dark illusion,
You lie—your story does but make confusion.
For can you alter that you brand with shame,
Or is it not unalterably the same?[4]

[1] I. 168, 9.

[2] Cf. I. 383, 15:

The mirrors of the eye show nothing true:
Make for thyself a mirror of clear thought.

[3] I. 120, last line.

[4] I. 322, 4.

( 14 )

Leisurely through life's long gloom
I have journeyed to my tomb;
Now that I am come so near,
Needs my soul must quake with fear.

What are we? what all that stirs
In this teeming universe
To a Power which, unspent,
Swallows the whole firmament?

Thunder roared: methought it was
A fell lion from whose jaws
Full in front of him there hung
Lolling many a lightning-tongue[1].

( 15 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

'Tis want of wit to disdain good counsel frankly bestowed
And still desire that the Days make right the wrong that they do.
Let Time alone and its folk to mind their business themselves;
Live thou in doubt of the world, mistrusting all of its kind.
Youth rode away: not a word of news about him have we,
Nor us revisits of him a wraith to gladden our eyes.
Ah, had we won to a land where Youth is, how should we grudge
Our camels' due—saddles wrought of fragrant Indian wood?
A man grows older and leaves his prime in pawn to Decay,
Then gets a new gaberdine of hoariness to put on;
And live he never so long, repentance tarries behind
Until the Dooms on him fall ere any vow he hath ta'en.
Fate's equinoctial line sprang from a marvellous point,
That into nothingness shot lines, pens, and writers and all![2]

( 16 )

This folk, I know not what befools them,
And worse their fathers sinned, maybe;
Their senseless prayers for him who rules them
The pulpit almost weeps to see[3].

[1] II. 81, last line.

[2] I. 106, 9.

[3] Since Fate decides all, it is folly to pray for the reigning prince. Von Kremer (*op. cit.* p. 67) thinks that these lines are aimed at the Fáṭimid conquerors of Syria and imply that the people had no choice but to submit.

Loth came we and reluctant go
And forced endure the time between.
Allah, to whom our praises flow,
Beside His might grand words are mean.

Life seems the vision of one sleeping
Which contraries interpret after:
'Tis joy whenever thou art weeping,
Thy smiles are tears, and sobs thy laughter;
And Man, exulting in his breath,
A prisoner kept in chains for death[1].

( 17 )

From Doom, determined that no state shall stand,
Nor gift nor guard can save the tyrant king,
Not though the planet Mars were in his hand
A shaft, and Jupiter a target-ring[2].

( 18 )

Plague on this body, full of dole,
Thy fated thoroughfare, O soul!
And may this soul accursed be,
O body, whilst it fares through thee!

Ye twain were wedded and made one,
And by your wedlock was begun
The birth of portents which unbind
Havoc and ruin to mankind[3].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 19 )

Shall ever the dead man's soul return after he is gone,
To render his kin the meed of thanks for their flowing tears?
The hearse-bearers' necks and hands conveyed him—a change of state
From when to and fro he fared in palanquins all of gold;

[1] I. 325, 13. Cf. I. 328, 5–9 (a remarkably close parallel) and II. 305, 2: "This life is a dream: if a vision of evil occurs in it, expect the vision to be fortunate. When a man slumbers, he may dream that he is weeping and wake with a new feeling of joy in which there is no pain." Cf. also II. 126, 6: "They have asserted that the miserable man is he who gained prosperity in the world, and that the true happiness belongs to the most miserable. If such be the fact, then the world is a dream that makes censure a farce."

[2] II. 23, 6.

[3] II. 149, 13.

And liefer had he alive been trodden below their feet
Than high they had lifted up his corpse on their shoulders borne.
O levelling Death! to thee a rich man is like a poor,
Thou car'st not that one hath hit the right way, another missed.
The knight's coat of mail thou deem'st in softness a maiden's shift,
And frail as the spider's house the domed halls of Chosroes.
To earth came he down unhorsed when Death in the saddle sate,
Tho' aye 'mongst his clan was he the noblest of them that ride.
A bier is but like a ship: it casteth its wrecked away
To drown in a sea of death where wave ever mounts on wave[1].

( 20 )

Ah, let us go, whom nature gave firm minds and courage fast,
To meet the Fates pursuing us, that we may die at last.
The draught of Life, to me it seems the bitterest thing to drain,
And lo, in bitter sooth we all must spew it out again[2].

( 21 )

World-wide seems to spread a fragrance
From the sweetness of the flowers.
All praise Him, the All-sustainer,
Clouds and plants and rocks and water.
We—we burden Earth so sorely
That she well-nigh sinks beneath us[3].

( 22 )

I charged my soul and fondly counselled her,
But she would not comply.
My sins in number as the sands—no care
To count them up have I.
My daily lot comes, be my hand remiss,
Or near to it, or far
As Pleiades and Spica Virginis
And Sirius' twofold star[4].

[1] I. 123, 2.
[2] I. 54, 9.
[3] I. 323, 2.
[4] I. 66, 3.

(Metre : *Basíṭ.*)

( 23 )

Life ends, and no jar for us who thirst was bled of its wine,
Nor cupped thro' long years of drought our camel aged and worn[1].
And so we part, nothing won whereby we plainly should know
What purpose touching the earth's inhabitants was designed.
This knowledge neither do tales tradition-borne to us give
Nor any star that is watched by patient eyes on the earth.
Time fades away with us, bleaching all the green of our leaf;
No sooner each crop anew springs up than lo, it is mown[2].

( 24 )

In these thy days the learned are extinct,
O'er them night darkens, and our human swarms
Roam guideless since the black mare lost her blaze[3].
All masculines are servants of the Lord,
All feminines His handmaids. The moon, now thin
Riding on high, now full, the Lesser Bear.
Water and clay, the Pleiads and the sun,
Earth, sky, and morning—are not all these His?
No sage will chide thee for confessing that.
O brother, let me pray God to forgive me,
For but a gasp of breath in me remains.
"The noble"? Ay, we talk of them. Our age
Hath only persons, names, tales long ago
For gain invented and by fools re-told.
Yonder bright stars to my true fancy seem
Nets which the hunter Time flings o'er his prey.
How wondrously is mortal fate fulfilled!
And seeing Death at work—the husband's kin
And wife's consumed together and none spared—
Wise men towards submission shape their will.

[1] In seasons of famine the pre-Islamic Arabs made use of camel's blood which they put into a gut and broiled.

[2] I. 253, last line.

[3] The commentator supposes the meaning to be "since the world was deprived of those most conspicuous for learning and wisdom." According to Von Kremer (*op. cit.* p. 70), "the black mare" refers to the 'Abbásid dynasty, which adopted black as its official colour; and this is probably the correct interpretation.

Ever since falsehood was, it ruled the world,
And sages died in anger. O Asmá,
Look for a certain day to find thee out,
Wert thou a chamois on a peak unclimbed.
If the four enemy humours in man's body
Concordant mix, he thrives; else tirelessly
They sow disease and swooning. I have found
The world a ruffian brute, exempt from law—
"Wounds by a brute inflicted go scot-free"—[1]
A thing of nights and days; in the which aspect
Life's black and white bespeckled snake creeps on[2].

( 25 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

Were I sent out to explore this world of thine by a band
Migrating hither, from me no liar's tale would they hear,
But words like these: "'Tis a land whose herbs are sickness and
plague,
Its sweetest water distils a bane for generous souls.
Oh, 'tis the torment of Hell! Make haste, up, saddle and ride
To any region but that! Avoid it, camp ye not there!
Abominations it hath; no day or part of a day
Is pure and clean. Travel on, spur fast and faster the steeds!
I tell you that which is known for sure, not tangled in doubt;
None drawn with cords of untruth inveigle I to his harm."[3]

( 26 )

(Metre: *Wáfir.*)

Commandments there be which some minds reckon lightly,
Yet no man knoweth whom shall befall perdition.
The Book of Mohammed, ay, and the Book of Moses,
The Gospel of Mary's son and the Psalms of David,
Their bans no nation heeded, their wisdom perished
In vain—and like to perish are all the people.

[1] In Mohammedan law no penalty can be exacted for wounds inflicted by animals.

[2] I. 57, 9.

[3] I. 107, 7.

Two homes hath a man to dwell in, and Life resembles
A bridge that is travelled over in ceaseless passage[1].
Behold an abode deserted, a tomb frequented!
Nor houses nor tombs at last shall remain in being[2].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 27 )

Whenever a babe first cries, its parents and kinsfolk say
(Tho' mutely), "The darts of Change will fall thick and fast:
endure!
The world made us miserable, albeit we loved it long:
Now try it and pass, thou too, thy lifetime in misery.
And show not as if to thee 'twere nothing, for each of us
Bears witness that in his heart it wakens a fierce desire."[3]

( 28 )

Age after age entirely dark hath run
Nor any dawn led up a rising sun.
Things change and pass, the world unshaken stands
With all its western, all its eastern lands.

The Pen flowed and the fiat was fulfilled,
The ink dried on the parchment as Fate willed.
Chosroes could his satraps round him save,
Or Caesar his patricians—from the grave?[4]

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 29 )

Athirsting art thou for Youth's fresh water, and all the while
Since ever so long ago 'tis sinking and ebbing.
Thou seest it on the lips of others and canst not take:
When that that is loved departs, then thou wilt be loathèd[5].

[1] Cf. I. 308, 12:

Life is a bridge between two deaths—'tis crossed
That moment when the man to life is lost.

[2] I. 324, 11.

[3] II. 129, 4.

[4] II. 120, 1. Chosroes (*Kisrá*) is the Persian and Caesar (*Qayṣar*) the Byzantine emperor.

[5] II. 59, 3.

( 30 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

It may be the stars of Night are setting their thought to work
To make known a mystery, and all eyes shall then behold.
I came into this abode reluctantly and depart
Elsewhither against my will: God witnesseth it is so.
And now in the space 'tween past and future am I compelled
To action? or have I power and freedom to do my best?
O World, may I get well rid of thee! for thy folk's one voice
Is folly, and Moslems match in wickedness those they rule;
And one puts himself to shame, disclosing his inmost mind,
And one hides his carnal thoughts—a zealot and bigot he!
The greybeard is but a child in purpose; the aged crone
Desires to enjoy her life like any full-bosomed maid.
Alas, strange it is how run we after a liar's tales
And leave what we plainly see of foolishness in ourselves.
These mortals are lost to truth: ascetic there never was
Amongst them, and ne'er shall be, until from the dead they rise[1].

( 31 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

'Tis sorrow enough for man that after he roamed at will,
The Days beckon him and say, "Begone, enter now a grave!"
How many a time our feet have trodden beneath the dust
A brow of the arrogant, a skull of the debonair![2]

( 32 )

The world's best moment is a calm hour passed
In listening to a friend who can talk well.
How wonderful is Life from first to last!
Old Time keeps ever young of tooth. There fell
His ruin upon the nations: in each clime
Their graves were dug—no grave was digged for Time[3].

( 33 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

To live is the common hope; yet never thou putt'st to proof
The terrors of Time but when thou verily livest.

[1] I. 242, 9. [2] I. 214, 9. [3] I. 199, 11.

If scattered in disarray the limbs of my body lie,
In summer let woe betide or winter, I care not.
Do thou feather, if thou canst, the nest of a needy wight,
And brag not abroad that thou hast feathered it finely;
And though unto men thy wealth and opulence overflow,
Be sure thou shalt sink, O sea, howe'er high thou surgest![1]

( 34 )

(Metre: *Kámil.*)

I welcome Death in his onset and the return thereof,
That he may cover me with his garment's redundancy.
This world is such an abode that if those present here
Have their wits entire, they will never weep for the absent ones.
Calamities exceeding count hath it brought to light;
Beneath its arm and embosomed close how many more!
It cleaves us all with its swords asunder and smites us down
With its spears and finds us out, right home, with its sure-winged shafts.
Its prize-winners, who won the power and the wealth of it,
Are but little distant in plight from those who lost its prize.

* * * * *

And a strange thing 'tis, how lovingly doth every man
Desire the Mother of stench the while he rails at her[2].

( 35 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Softly, my fellow-men! for look, if I blame your ways,
I needs must, no help for it, begin with my mortal self.
Oh, when shall Time cease—the power of Allah is over all—
And we be at rest in earth, hushed everlastingly?
This body and soul have housed together a period,
And ever my soul thereby was anguished, her brightness dimmed[3].

( 36 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

Sick men, if guided aright, themselves will physic their pain.
The wise could heal, were they found, or else thou seekest in vain.
We flee from Death's bitter cup: he follows, loving and fain[4].

[1] I. 175, 6.

[2] I. 142, penult. "The Mother of stench" (*Umm dafr*) is a "name of honour" which Ma'arrí frequently bestows on the World.

[3] I. 48, 7. [4] I. 50, 4.

( 37 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

For him whose hour is come low in the tomb to be laid
A house of wood they have redd, a house nor lofty nor wide.
O ye that mourn, let him be, with Earth alone for his friend:
No strangeness knows he with her: of comrades trustiest she.
Earthen the body, and rain the best of gifts to the earth—
Pray ye the bountiful clouds to keep well-watered his limbs!
Be youth's cheek never so bright, a strip of dust shall he make,
And fear surpriseth him when his face grows haggard and wan.
Whomso the morrow of death from heavy straitness hath freed
No better fares than a skin dragged to and fro in carouse[1].
Beware of laughter and shun to live familiar with it:
Seest not the cloud, when 'twas moved to laugh, how hoarsely it wailed?[2]

( 38 )

(Metre: *Kámil.*)

O shapes of men dark-looming under the battle-dust,
Dyeing red the sword and spurring horses lithe and lean,
And plunging into the deeps of pitchiest dead of night,
And ever cleaving through the measureless waste of sand—
Their hope a little water, that they may lick it up—
What bitterness do they drain, and all for a boon so cheap!

* * * * *

When spirit journeys away from body, its dwelling-place,
Then hath body naught to do but sink and be seen no more[3].

( 39 )

(Metre: *Wáfir.*)

'Tis hateful that wail be heard of a weeping mourner
When cometh mine hour to die and fulfil my doomsday.
Not willingly went I down to the fated waters:
The two strong youths[4] by force haled me between them.
If choice of my lot were granted, I ne'er had moved house
To dwell in a place of narrowness after wideness.

[1] Meaning that the winds will blow his dust hither and thither.
[2] I. 106, 2. The cloud's "laughter" is lightning, its "wailing" thunder.
[3] I. 112, 1.
[4] Day and Night.

I found all creatures riddled and strung together
By deathbolts rushing hard on the heels of deathbolts.
"Think lightly of this our life" is the charge I give you,
For soon shall I tread the footmarks of my comrades[1].

( 40 )

Death, an thou wilt come anear me,
Not unwelcome is thy nearing—
Safest, mightiest of strongholds,
Once I pass the grave's portcullis.
Whoso meets thee shall not spy on
Peril or forebode affliction.

I am like a camel-owner
Handling all day long the scabbed ones,
Or a wild-bull seeking thistles
Far and wide in wildernesses.
If I fall back to my first source,
'Tis an ill tomb I must lie in.
Every moment as it fleeteth
One more knot of Life unravels.
Who but dreads a doom approaching?
Ay, and who shall fail to drink it?
Well they guard against the sword-edge
Lest their skins should feel its sharpness;
But the agony of deathbed,
Sorer 'tis than thousand stabbings.
Reason wars in us with nature,
Nature makes a hard resistance.

O grave-dweller, thou instruct me
Touching Death and his devices;
Be not niggard, for 'tis certain
I therein am all unpractised.
Wheeling, down on men he swoopeth
As a hawk that hunts a covey,
Or as grim wolf striding swiftly
For a night-raid on the sheepfold.

[1] I. 136, 7.

Ruin spares not any creature
In the fold or on the field-track,
Nor 'tis my belief the Dooms pass
Idly o'er a star-sown region:
They shall seize on Lyra, Virgo,
On Arcturus and his consort.
Every soul do they search after
In the wide world east and westward,
Visit ruthlessly of human
Kind the alien and the Arab.

Not a lightning-gleam but somewhere
Wakes a thrill of joy or sorrow.
Fancy hath enslaved the freeman
From her toils to flee unwilling.
Those that seek me shall not find me,
Far away my camping-places.
On our crowns erewhile the locks lay
Jet as 'twere the raven's plumage;
Then the mirk cleared and we marvelled
How the pitch-black changed to milk-white.
When my belly a little dwindles[1],
I shall count upon God's favour,
Though provided for the night-march
Only with a skin of water[2].

( 41 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

If no elder shall be left behind me to feel himself
Undone by my loss, nor child, for what am I living?
And Life is a malady whose one medicine is Death,
So quietly let me go the way to my purpose[3].

( 42 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

Better for Adam and all who issued forth from his loins
That he and they, yet unborn, created never had been!
For whilst his body was dust and rotten bones in the earth,
Ah, did he feel what his children saw and suffered of woe?

[1] *I.e.* in consequence of fasting. [2] I. 115, 13. [3] I. 182, 2.

What wouldest thou with a house that ne'er is thine to possess,
Whence, after dwelling a little space, thou goest again?
Thou leav'st it sullenly, not with sound of praise in thine ears,
And in thy heart the desire thereof—a passionate love.

* * * * *

The spirit's vesture art thou, which afterwards it puts off—
And vesture moulders away, ay, even armour and mail.
The Nights, renewing themselves, outwear it: still do they show
In ever wearing it out the same old treacherous grain.
But men are different sorts, and he that speaks to them truth
Is paid with hatred, and he that lies and flatters, with gold.
Who dirhems hath but a few to falsehood hasteneth soon,
The tales he feigns and invents make heaps of money for him.
And oftentimes will a man upbraid himself for his true
And honest speech, when he sees the luck of fellows that lie[1].

( 43 )

The World, oh, fie upon her!
Umm Dafr her name of honour—
Mother of stink, not scent[2].
The dove amongst the sprays there,
Warbling so well his lays there,
Hath voice more eloquent
(Sages opine) than any
That preach in pulpit, when he
Vows that Time's gifts are many
And all with poison blent[3].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 44 )

Of each day I take adieu, aware that the like of it,
Once gone from the like of me, will never return more.
Ill-starred are the easy ways of life where the careless stroll,
Howbeit they deem their lot auspicious and happy.

[1] II. 120, last line. [2] See note 2, p. 71 *supra*.

[3] I. 136, 2. Cf. I. 81, 8: "I attributed the notes of the dove to the more proper cause, for I did not say, 'It sings,' but I said, 'It weeps and moans.' And this is because happenings are many, and the greater part of them are rough, not kindly."

For me, 'tis as though I ride an old jaded beast, what time
Outstretched on a bough the lizard basks in the noon-blaze.
Death journeys amid the night when all friends and foemen sleep,
And ever afoot is he whilst we are reclining[1].

( 45 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

O purblind men, is none clear-eyed amongst you?
Alas, have ye none to guide you towards the summit?
We people the world in youthtide and in greyness
Of eld, and in woe we sleep and in woe we waken;
And all lands we inhabit at every season,
And find earth's hills the same as we found its valleys.
A bed is made smooth and soft for the rich man's slumber—
Oh, gladder for him a grave than a couch to lie on!
Whenever a soul is joined to a living body,
Between them is war of Moslem and unbeliever[2].

( 46 )

In pleasures is no stay: their sweets beguile
At first, but ah the bitter after-while!
Time vowed we all to dust should surely come,
And sent, to search us out, the messengers of doom.
Man, once enriched by Death, wants nothing more;
A child receives Life's breath, and he is poor[3].

( 47 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

Had men followed me—confound them!—well had I guided them
To Truth or to some plain track by which they might soon arrive.
For here have I lived until of Time I am tired, and it
Of me; and my heart hath known the cream of experience.

* * * * *

What choice hath a man except seclusion and loneliness,
When Destiny grants him not the gaining of that he craves?
Make peace, if thou wilt, or war: the Days with indifferent hand
Their measure mete out alike to warrior and friend of peace[4].

[1] I. 245, 14.
[2] I. 292, 5.
[3] I. 319, 10.
[4] I. 121, last line.

( 48 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

The wants of my soul keep house, close-curtained, like modest wives,
While other men's wants run loose, like women sent back divorced.
A steed when the bit chafes sore can nowise for all his wrath
Prevail over it except he champ on the iron curb;
And never doth man attain to swim on a full-borne tide
Of glory but after he was sunken in miseries.
It hindereth not my mind from sure expectation of
A mortal event, that I am mortal and mortal's son.
I swerve and they miss their mark, the arrows Life aims at me,
But sped they from bows of Death, not thus would they see me swerve.
The strange camels jealously are driven from the waterside,
But no hand may reach so far to drive from the pond of Death.
I vow, ne'er my watcher watched the storm where should burst its flood,
Nor searched after meadows dim with rain-clouds my pioneer[1].
And how should I hope of Time advantage and increment,
Since even as the branches he destroyed he hath rased the root?[2]

( 49 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

Sore, sore the barren one's grief: no child conceived she and bare;
Yet that is better for her, with right thought were she but blest.
Death taketh naught from a lonely soul excepting itself,
Whenas he musters his might and of a sudden waylays.
Alas, the crier of good—no ear inclineth to him:
Good, since the world was, hath been a lost thing ever unsought[3].

( 50 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Each time had its turn of me—a morning, an eve, a night—
And over me passed To-day, To-morrow, and Yesterday.
In splendour upsprings a day, then blindingly creeps a mirk,
A moon rises full and sets, then followeth it a sun.

[1] *I.e.* I never sought riches. The metaphor is one of many which remind us that in the Arabian deserts not only wealth, but the existence of man and beast depends on anxiously prognosticated showers of rain.

[2] I. 277, 10.

[3] I. 271, 8.

I go from the world, farewell unspoken, without a word
Of peace on my lips, for oh, its happenings are hunger-pangs.
Abstainer in two respects am I, never having touched
A woman of swelling breast or kissed pilgrim-wise the Stone.

* * * * *

And now I have lived to cross the border of fifty years,
Albeit enough for me in hardship were ten or five.
And if as a shadow they are gone, yet they also seem
Like heaped spoils, whereof no fifth for Allah was set apart.
The bale must on camel's back be corded, the world be loathed,
The body be laid in earth, the trace and the track be lost.
Make haste, O my heart, make haste, repenting, to do the deeds
Of righteousness—know'st thou not the grave is my journey's end?
And sometimes I speak out loud and sometimes I whisper low:
In sight of the One 'tis all the same, whether low or loud.
And still with adventurous soul I dive in the sea of Change,
But only to drown, alas, or ever I clutch its pearl[1].

( 51 )

'Tis pain to live and pain to die,
Oh, would that far-off fate were nigh!
An empty hand, a palate dry,
A craving soul, a staring eye.

Who kindles fires in the night
For glory's sake he shows a light;
But man, to live, needs little wealth—
A shirt, a bellyful, and health.

Clasped in the tomb, he careth not
For anything he gave or got;
Silken touch and iron thrust
Are one to him that now is dust.

* * * * *

We smile on happy friends awhile,
Though nothing here is worth a smile.
Give joy to those, more blest than I,
Who gained their dearest wish—to die[2]!

[1] II. 2, 3.

[2] I. 77, 3.

(Metre: *Ṭawîl.*) ( 52 )

So soon as they put me out of sight, I shall reck no more
When over me sweeps in gusts a northwind or southwind.
Time's ruinous strokes will fall: I cannot preserve my bones
By getting myself a chest of cypress or pinewood.
I wonder, will frightful hordes of Ethiops and Nubians
Because of the wrongs I did be seen at my rest-place?
Will colour of sin endow the white-gleaming dust above
With that noble wannish hue of piety's champions?
"How many a pillowing skull of mortals and cradling side,"
Says Earth, "turned to rottenness and crumbled beneath me!"
And lo, though I wrought no good to speak of, I surely hope
My drouth will be quenched at last in amplest of buckets[1].

( 53 )

If Time aids thee to victory, he will aid
Thy foe anon to take a full revenge.
The Days' meridian heats bear off as spoil
That which was shed from the moist dawns gone by[2].

( 54 )

Earth's lap me rids in any case
Of all the ills upon her face,
And equally 'twixt lord and slave
Divides the portion of the grave.
A long, long time have I lived through,
And never by experience knew
That we can hear the step so light
Of angel or demonic sprite.

To God the kingdom over all;
For they, the greater as the small—
The living as the dead—remain,
And nothing perishes in vain.
Lo, if a body dies, in store
This earth will keep it evermore;
And at a sign of parting given
The soul already is in heaven[3].

[1] I. 127, last line. [2] I. 413, 3. [3] II. 158, 9.

( 55 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

Upon the hazard of Life doth man come into the world
Against his will, and departs a loser chafed and chagrined.
He seweth, stitch after stitch, his sins to clothe him withal,
As though the crown of his head were ne'er with hoariness sown[1].

( 56 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

A bird darted on my left, but augury I practise not,
Howbeit its flight may send me somewhat of evil chance.
I see that from every race continually mounteth up
A babble of delirium, both the long and the short of it;
That piecemeal and limb by limb the body returns to earth,
But as for the spirit, none well knows whither that is gone.
And surely one day shall we, of utter necessity,
Set out on a hateful road at morning or eventide.
If base souls were reconciled with noble, their common wounds
Forgiveness had healed, not law that punishes like with like[2].

( 57 )

Consider every moment past
A thread from Life's frayed mantle cast.
Bear with the world that shakes thy breast
And live serene as though at rest.
How often did a coal of fire
Blaze up awhile, sink low, expire!
O captain, with calm mind lead on,
Where rolls the dust of war: 'tis none
Of thine, the cause that's lost or won[3].
Time, who gave thee so scant a dole,
He takes of human lives large toll.
Spare us more wounds: enough we owe
A fate enamoured of our woe.

[1] II. 70, penult.

[2] I. 225, 5. Ma'arrí condemns the Mohammedan law of retaliation (*qiṣáṣ*). Cf. I. 47, 8; 386, 4–5 (where فُدِيَتْ is a mistake for وُدِيَتْ); II. 236, penult.

[3] Cf. I. 60, 3.

Aid him that weeps and pining sighs,
And ask the laugher why he joys,
When our most perfect sage seems yet
A schoolboy at his alphabet[1].

( 58 )

(Metre: *Wáfir.*)

Aweary am I of living in town and village—
And oh, to be camped alone in a desert region,
Revived by the scent of lavender when I hunger
And scooping into my palm, if I thirst, well-water!
Meseemeth, the Days are dromedaries lean and jaded
That bear on their backs humanity travelling onward;
They shrink not in dread from any portentous nightmare,
Nor quail at the noise of shouting and rush of panic,
But journey along for ever with those they carry,
Until at the last they kneel by the dug-out houses.
No need, when in earth the maid rests covered over,
No need for her locks of hair to be loosed and plaited;
The young man parts from her, and his tears are flowing—
Even thus do the favours flow of disgustful Fortune[2].

( 59 )

The nature mingled with the souls of men
Against their reason fights, and breaks it so
That now its lustre seems of no avail,
A sun palled o'er with clouds and shadows dark,
Until, when death approaches, they perceive
That all they wrought is foolishness and vain.

*  *  *  *  *

A knave may go abroad and seal his fate,
As when the viper sallies from its hole;
Or stay at home to die by slow degrees,
Like meagre wolf that in the covert hides.
The soul is Life's familiar: at the thought
Of parting burst, in torrent gush, her tears.

*  *  *  *  *

[1] I. 223, 4.

[2] I. 387, 6.

And well I know, ungrieving for aught past,
My time's least portion is this present last.
The righteous seek what Law forbears to ban,
But I have found no law permitting—Man[1].

( 60 )

A mighty God, men evil-handed,
The dogmas of free-will and fate;
Day and Night with falsehood branded,
Woes that ne'er had or have a date[2].

( 61 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

To live we desire because of exceeding folly,
Albeit to lose our life were a lot desirèd.
Tho' lion and hare complain of their evil fortune,
Nor hoarse growls mercy win nor feeble squeakings.
The while I was there, I nothing could see that liked me,
And wished to be gone—oh, when shall I go for ever?[3]

( 62 )

The Imám, he knows—'tis no ill thought of mine—
The missionaries work for place and power[4].
In the air a myriad floating atoms shine,
But sink to rest in the passing of an hour.
There lives no man distinct from his fellows: all
One general kind, their bodies to earth akin;
And sure the hidden savour of honey is gall—
Confound thee! how thy fool tongue licks it in!
Thronged cities shall turn to desolate sands again
And the vast wilderness be choked with men[5].

[1] II. 183, 4.

[2] II. 180, 12.

[3] I. 93, 6.

[4] The Imám is the leader of a religious sect or community, while the missionaries (*dá'i*, plural *du'át*) are those who carry on propaganda and endeavour to increase the number of his adherents. Professor Browne (*Literary History of Persia*, vol. I. p. 410 foll.) gives an interesting account of the methods employed by the Ismá'ílí *dá'is*, to whom Ma'arrí is referring here.

[5] I. 94, 5.

(63)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

Nay, tremble not, O my limbs, because of your mouldering
When earth shall be cast upon the grave that is dug for you.
For reason it thus: if now this body is surely vile
Before dissolution, worse and viler the coward's act.
I ride on the shoulders of mine hours, and fain would I
Have tarried, but never Time's departure is tarrying.
May God punish Day and Night! They hold me in dire suspense:
By two threads I seem to hang—the threads of a thing of naught.
My life, when it comes to birth and hastens towards decay,
Methinks, 'tis but as a lad who frolics and plays with dust[1].

(64)

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

Thou campest, O son of Adam, the while thou marchest,
And sleep'st in thy fold, and thou on a night-long journey.
Whoso in this world abides hath hope of profit,
Howbeit a living man is for aye a loser.
The blind folk everywhere, eastward and westward,
Have numbered amongst their riches the staves they lean on[2].

(65)

Oh, many a soul had won a pleasant life
Had she not stood in danger from her fates.
Things here are but a line writ by the pen
Of Doom; and love of them begins the line[3].

(66)

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

The youth goes on wearing out his garment of Yemen stuff
A certain season until he wears the garment of eld.
And that indeed is a robe, when any one puts it on,
Excludes delight evermore, casts joy like spittle away.
Inhabitants of the earth! full many a rider have I
Asked how ye fare, for I know no news of you, not a word.
Change now hath ceased, hardships now are unremembered: 'tis thus
The aged camel forgets, when quit of service, his gall.

* * * * *

[1] I. 199, 5. [2] I. 396, 11. [3] I. 382, 15.

The city's leading divine went forth to bury his friend,
And seest not thou that he brought no lesson back from the grave?
The present hour, it is thine; the past a babble of dream;
And nothing sweet hath in store for thee the rest that remains[1].

(67)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Tho' doubtlessly long ago the genie of Youth is dead,
The devils that haunt the heart scorn aught but rebellion.
She teemeth, the noisome world, with sour milk; or be it sweet,
How many a one she spurns who came for refreshment!
A cool draught I drank that left no fire of thirst behind,
And flung from my shoulders off the fairest of mantles[2].

(68)

Men are as fire: a spark it throws,
Which, being kindled, spreads and grows.
Both swallow-wort and palm to-day
Earth breeds, and neither lasts for aye.
Had men wit, happy would they call
The kinsfolk at the funeral;
Nor messengers would run with joy
To greet the birthday of a boy[3].

(69)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

O company of the dead, request ye the last-comers
To give you the news, for they are nighest the knowledge.
They'll tell you the lands are still unchanged from the state ye knew
Aforetime—all keeps the same in highland and lowland.
The world hath not ceased to make a dupe of its bosom-friend
And leave him awake instead of closing his eyelids,
And guilefully show the dark in semblance of light to him,
And feed him with gall the while he thinks it is honey;
And lo, on a bier hath laid him out—him that many a night
Rode forth on a hard camel or mounted a courser.
It left no device untried to fool him, no effort he
To love it with all his heart in utter devotion[4].

[1] I. 359, 5. [2] I. 280, 13. [3] I. 317, 4. [4] I. 268, 15.

(70)

The holy fights by Moslem heroes fought,
The saintly works by Christian hermits wrought
And those of Jewry or of Sabian creed—
Their valour reaches not the Indian's deed
Whom zeal and awe religiously inspire
To cast his body on the flaming pyre.
Yet is man's death a long, long sleep of lead[1]
And all his life a waking. O'er our dead
The prayers are chanted, hopeless farewells ta'en;
And there we lie, never to stir again.
Shall I so fear in mother earth to rest?
How soft a cradle is thy mother's breast!
When once the viewless spirit from me is gone,
By rains unfreshened let my bones rot on![2]

(71)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

The righteous are in a sea, albeit on land they dwell:
Wherever they find the good, the evil is not to seek.
This world am I owing aught of kindness, when that which grieves
The soul here is many times the double of that which glads?
The comrade of Life stands face to face still with that he loathes,
Ay, were it no more than heats of midday and frosts of night[3].

(72)

Winter is come upon us, to its sway
Subduing naked poor and mantled prince;
And Fortune on her favourite bestows
A people's food, whilst one more needy starves.
Had this world been a bride, thou wouldst have found
The husband-murderess unmated yet.
Bend thy right hand to drink in purity,
Loathly for drinking is the ivory cup.

[1] The connexion of ideas seems to be this: "I admire the courage of the Indian ascetic who cremates himself, but death, after all, is not such a terrible thing: it is only a falling asleep."

[2] I. 260, 6.

[3] I. 353, 5.

Mankind are on a journey: let us make
Provision for the farthest that may fall.
Admire none safe from trouble—safe, forsooth!
Plunged in the swoll'n tide of a wave-tossed sea;
A pioneer exploring for his tribe,
Who midst the dark descries a lightning-gleam,
And did not God avert, would meet such woe
As monarchs crowned have met and noteless men[1].

(73)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Our souls with each other vie in snatching the spoils of Life
Unguarded awhile: thou too surprise, if thou canst, the foe.
My stay in the world heaps loss upon me—and seem not I
Already departed hence, albeit I here remain?
No sooner a man is born than straightway his death becomes,
What fortune soe'er he gain, the grandest of gifts to him.
The world's age hath mounted up: so old 'tis, that yonder stars
Methinks are the hair of Night with hoariness glistening.

* * * * *

The union of all mankind in error, from East to West,
Amongst them was made complete by difference of rite and creed.
O short-stepping slow-paced Hours! and natheless I know full well
They swiftlier pass than steeds that move with a raking stride[2].

(74)

Now sleeps the sufferer, but never sleeps
Thy sentry-star, O Night, in mirkest hours.
If yonder heaven unfading verdure keeps[3],
Perchance the shining stars may be its flowers.

Men are as plants upspringing after rain,
Which, springing up, even then begin to die—
Poppies and cowslips: one herd doth profane
Their bloom, another feeds on low and high.

[1] I. 204, 2. [2] I. 126, 5.

[3] In Arabic and Persian poetry the sky is either blue or green. The words denoting these colours take a wide range and are sometimes applied to objects which we should rather describe as grey, tawny, or black.

The bastard and the child of wedlock show
Outwardly like: no eye discerns the stain.
Ignorance rules, and only this we know,
That we shall pass and One Lord shall remain[1].

( 75 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

He gave to himself the name of Joy—fool and liar he![2]
May earth stop his mouth! In Time is anything joyful?
Yes: one part of good is there in many a thousand parts,
And when we have found it, those that follow are evil.
Our riches and poverty, precaution and heedlessness
And glory and shame—'tis all a cheat and illusion.
Encompassed are we by Space, which cannot remove from us,
And Time, which doth ever pass away with his people.
So charge, as thou wilt, the foe, or skulk on the battle-field:
The Nights charge at thee and wheel again to the onset[3].

( 76 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

It angers thee—does it not?—that base thou art called and vile,
And yet thou art base enough, for Time is thy father.
The fool took his world to wife: he recked not, and surely she
Hath plagued and defied him after seizing the dowry[4].
By quitting her ways of guile and torment go, purge thyself!
This harlot makes good her plea of purity never.
My lifetime I spent in breaths, dividing therewith the days
At first, then the months which follow each after other;
And little by little thus crept on, as a wayfarer
Whose sides spasms heave—for him his comrades must tarry:
Like ants ever climbing up the ridge of a sandy dune,
Not staying their march until the ridge is behind them[5].

[1] I. 338, penult.

[2] Ma'arrí ridicules the inappropriateness of personal names, *e.g.*, when a coward is known as Asad (Leo), of honorific titles that should be reserved for God alone, such as Muqtadir and Qáhir, and of *kunyas* given to children (I. 147, 8; 225, 12–13; 366, 9–10; II. 95, 7). His own true name, he says, is not Abu 'l-'Alá (father of eminence) but Abu 'l-Nuzúl, *i.e.* father of degradation (II. 232, 6).

[3] I. 315, 2.

[4] According to Moslem law, the dowry is paid by the husband to the wife.

[5] I. 309, 13.

(77)

Your fortunes are as lamps that guide by night,
Make haste ere they be spent. Even as a fire's
Own flames consume it and do quench its light,
So by repeated breaths our life expires.

How many a speaker, many a hearer slept
'Neath earth as though they ne'er could speak or hear!
Dark clouds unsmiling o'er them long had wept—
*Their* hands no bounty shed, *their* eyes no tear[1].

(78)

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

Our bodies of dust, they quake with a doubt uneasy
When, ceasing from all unrest, long-wandering mortals
Are ware of return to Earth, who of kin is nearest—
Best healer of pain, tho' sound as a crow's their health be.
For lo, to the clouds they soar in a vain ambition,
And tumble with souls athrill to the chase of honour,
And spears in the clash are shivered and swords are dunted.
For dross they would die; yet he that complains of hunger,
He wants but a little food; or of thirst, but water.
Nobility's nature base blood hath corrupted:
Cross-breeding will mar the stock of a noble stallion.
And kings in their wealth deep wallow, but comes a suitor
Their bounty to taste, they prove a mirage deluding;
And sometimes ravin goads from his lair the lion
To prowl all night in sheepcote and camel-shelter.
If Fate's stern hand on high ne'er trembles, surely
Thy trembling in hope or fear will avail thee nothing[2].

(79)

(Metre: *Mutaqárib*. Scheme: ⏑ – ⏑̲ | ⏑ – ⏑̲ | ⏑ – ⏑̲ | ⏑ – .)

By night, while the foe slept, we journeyed in flight,
And praised in the morning our journey by night.
The sons of old Adam seek wealth to enjoy
Below in the earth and above in the sky.

[1] II. 78, 3. In this translation one verse of the original has been omitted.
[2] I. 90, 2.

A man guides the plough and a man wields the sword,
And both on the morrow have got their reward.
The soldier with glory returns home again,
The labourer comes loaden with trouble and pain[1].

( 80 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

I linger behind, alas, and know not the things unseen;
Perchance he that passes on is nearer to God than I.
The soul, fearing death, loves life, but long life is poison sure,
And all come to die, alike householder and wanderer.
The earth seeketh, even as we, its livelihood day by day
Apportioned: it eats and drinks of this human flesh and blood.
They slandered the sun himself, pretending he will not rise
When called at his hour except he suffer despite and blows[2].
Meseemeth, a crescent moon that shines in the firmament
Is Death's curvèd spear, its point well-sharpened to thrust at them;
And splendour of breaking day a sabre unsheathed by Dawn
Against them, whose edge is steeped in venom of mortal dooms[3].

( 81 )

Nor glory nor dishonour sundereth
Moses and Pharaoh in the hour of death—
Death, like a shivering crone who feeds a flame
With lote and laurel, for 'tis all the same;
A lioness that drags into her cave
Her slaughtered prey, the freeman and the slave,
Launching them piecemeal both with tongue and paw
Into wide-opened all-devouring maw[4].

[1] I. 72, 8. The literal translation of the last couplet is: "This one returns with (the letters) *'ayn* and *záy* (= *'izz*, glory), and that one with (the letters) *ḍáḍ* and *rá* (= *ḍurr*, pain).

[2] This refers to the well-known verses by Umayya b. Abi 'l-Ṣalt (ed. by Schulthess, No. 25, *vv.* 46–47):
"And at the end of every night the sun rises red, his colour turning to rose.
He does not rise for them willingly, but only when he is chastised and beaten."
The next verse was evidently suggested by a verse of Umayya which is quoted in the *Lisán*, VI. 50, 18.

[3] I. 82, 6. Cf. with the last four lines II. 332, 6–8.

[4] I. 385, penult.

( 82 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Man wishes that Life were incorruptible and that ne'er
Would perish and come to naught the woe of existence.
Even so is the ostrich of the desert in fear of death,
For all that its two sole foods are flint-stones and gourd-seeds[1].

( 83 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Untruth ran from sire to son amongst them: the sage alone
According to knowledge speaks, not after the ancients.
The world's children I have known and yet have I sued to them,
As though were unquenched my hope by knowing them inly.
Original wickedness is struggled against in vain,
What Nature hath moulded ill can never be mended.
The Book do ye read for truth and righteousness' sake? Not so:
Your piety only serves your pride and ambition.

* * * * *

And Life is a she-camel that bears far across the sands
An emigrant weeping sore for that which he suffers;
With travel I milked her strength remaining, until at last
I left her exhausted, no more milk in her udder;
And now, after being mauled, her old savageness is dead
And buried, except that still the tomb is her *háma*[2].

( 84 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

I see but a single part of sweet in the many sour,
And Wisdom that cries, "Beget no children, if thou art wise[3]";
Religion diseased: whoso is healthy and hopes to cure
Its sickness, he labours long and meanwhile himself falls sick;

[1] I. 246, 5.

[2] I. 305, 11. The pre-Islamic Arabs believed that the ghost or wraith of the dead man hovered over his grave in the shape of an owl (*háma*). Here the poet's meaning seems to be that he has rid himself of ignorance and superstition except in one particular: his life is still haunted by the fear of death.

[3] Literally, "let her (thy wife) be barren."

A dawn and a dark that seem—what signify else their hues
Alternate?—as stripes of white and black on a venomed snake;
And Time's universal voice commanding that they sit down
Who stood on their feet, and those who sate, that they now up-
stand.
Methinks, happiness and joy of heart is a fault in man:
Whenever it shows itself, 'tis punished with hate and wrath[1].

( 85 )

My God, oh, when shall I go hence? I have stayed too long and
tarry still.
I know not what my star may be, but ever it hath brought me ill.
From me no friend hath hope of boon, no enemy hath fear of bane.
Life is a painful malady, and Death—he comes to cure its pain.
The tomb receiveth me and them, and none was seen to rise again[2].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 86 )

What! shall a house be drest in glittering gold, and then
Its owner abandon it and presently go his way?
I see in the body a brand of fire: Death puts it out,
And lo, all the while thou liv'st it burns with a ceaseless flame[3].

(Metre: *Wáfir.*) ( 87 )

A man drew nigh a wife for a fated purpose,
To bring by his act a third life into being.
Without rest she the sore load bears, and only
'Tis laid down when the tale of her months is reckoned;
And she to her source returns—ay, all things living
Trace back to the ancient Four their common lineage[4].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 88 )

I travelled and got no good of body or soul thereby,
And naught was my turning home but folly and weakness.
Who feareth his Lord alone, him never His gifts will fail,
Albeit at praying-time he faces the sunrise.

[1] II. 295, 11.
[2] II. 324, 3.
[3] I. 83, 2.
[4] I. 91, 5.

I see how the living things of earth dread their doom: to them
Despair with the thunder comes and hope with the lightning.
Feel safe and secure, O bird! and thou fear not, O gazelle,
I'll harm thee: in fortune we are one, undivided[1].

( 89 )

The star-chart thou unrollest, to unravel
Life's knots; and flying Time bids thee make haste.
The world is never lavish of its honey
Till bitter mingles with the sweet we taste[2].

( 90 )

Pay ye no honour to my limbs when death
Descends on me: the body merits none.
'Tis like a mantle by the wearer prized,
Which he holds cheap when its new gloss is gone[3].

( 91 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

The first-born of Time enjoyed his young lusty strength, but we
Came weak, after he was old and fallen into dotage.
And would that a man were like the full-moon which lives anew
And rises a crescent moon when each month is vanished![4]

( 92 )

When I would string the pearls of my desire,
Alas, Life's too short thread denies them room.
Vast folios cannot yet contain entire
Man's hope; his life is a compendium[5].

( 93 )

My body a herb of earth, my head grown hoary—
The glistening flower is the herb's last glory.
When ships on high adventure sail with thee,
What rivers bear not rides upon the sea[6].

( 94 )

Though falcon-like Man peers at things,
A dark cloud to his mind's eye clings.
I say not foul is mixed with fair;
No, 'tis all foulness, I declare[7].

[1] II. 116, 9. [2] I. 213, 5. [3] I. 299, 12. [4] I. 307, 13.
[5] I. 317, 15. [6] I. 319, 16. [7] I. 347, 16.

( 95 )

There's no good in thy treating maladies
And agues after fifty years are past.
A man may live so long, they say on his decease
Not "He is dead," but "Now he lives at last."[1]

( 96 )

O'er many a race the sun's bright net was spread
And loosed their pearls nor left them even a thread.
This dire World delights us, though all sup,
All whom she mothers, from one mortal cup.
A choice of ills: which rather of the twain
Wilt thou?—to perish or to live in pain?[2]

( 97 )

I will do good the while I can—to-day;
O'er me, when I am dead, ye need not pray.
Though all your saints should bless me, will it win
A clear way out from that which shuts me in?[3]

( 98 )

The stars we ought to glorify,
Which God hath honoured and set high
For all the world. And Life, how be
It ne'er so fondly loved by thee,
Is like a chain of pearls ill-strung,
That chafed the neck on which it hung[4].

( 99 )

(Metre: *Mutaqárib.* Scheme: ⏑ – ⏑̲ | ⏑ – ⏑̲ | ⏑ – .)

I trespass, do evil—and He,
My Lord, knoweth well what I be.
O help me! for waking I seem
To live all the while in a dream[5].

[1] II. 48, 3.
[2] II. 149, 2.
[3] II. 149, penult.
[4] II. 275, 12.
[5] II. 277, penult.

( 100 )

'Tis plain what way I follow and what rule,
For am not I like all the rest a fool?
I too a creature of the world was made
And like the others lived and worked and played.
I came by fate divine and shall depart
(Hear my confession!) with God-fearing heart.
Not vain am I of any good I wrought;
Nay, by a sore dread are my wits distraught[1].

I conclude this section with a few short pieces which might be called elegiac epigrams if their purpose were not rather to warn and exhort than to mourn or commemorate.

( 101 )

Earth covered many a fresh young maid, alas,
Who Pleiad-like in glorious beauty shone;
Yet so self-pleased would look into her glass,
I sent no word of greeting but rode on[2].

( 102 )

Death came to visit him: he knit his brows
And frowned on Death—and never frowned again.
They gave him store of balm to join his folk,
But earth is balm enow for buried men.
Propped on his side, whilst in the tomb he lay,
To us he seemed a preacher risen to pray[3].

( 103 )

He boasts no diadem, having in the tomb
A prouder fate—the friend whom thou dost mourn.
A king wants thousands to defend him; Death
Stands not in need of any creature born[4].

( 104 )

As on her month's first night the crescent moon,
So came the youth and so departed soon.
Peace he hath won, from life untimely ta'en,
Who, had he lived, had suffered lifelong pain[5].

[1] II. 395, last line. [2] I. 140, penult. [3] I. 114, 11.
[4] I. 215, 3. [5] I. 400, 12.

( 105 )

They robed the Christian's daughter,
From high embowered room
In dusky robe they brought her
Down, down into a tomb—
And oh, her dress had often been
Gay as a peacock's plume[1].

## II.

### Human Society.

"It may be thou wilt abide in Paradise hereafter; at any rate in quitting *this* world thou hast escaped from Hell[2]." Would the poet have found life so painful if he had not been blind, poor[3], and disappointed in his hopes, and if the conditions of the age had been less deplorable than they were? Possibly; for we know that pessimism may spring from temperament or from philosophical reflection, and that a man's state of mind and feeling need not depend at all on the circumstances in which he lives. To grant this, however, is far from justifying the inference that Ma'arrí's private misfortunes and his consciousness of public ills had nothing to do with his philosophy of life. The former, culminating in his failure at Baghdád, caused him to feel that solitude was the only tolerable alternative to non-existence, while the latter confirmed him in the belief that all mankind are fools, knaves, liars, and hypocrites, or vented itself in denunciation of particular classes and professions. His contemporaries were not so uniformly black as he painted them, but since understanding comes before criticism, let us consider for a moment what was the general situation of the Moslem empire and especially of Syria during the last quarter of the tenth and the first half of the eleventh century A.D.

[1] *Luzúm*, II. 42, 11. [2] *Ibid.* II. 322, 8; cf. I. 317, 11; II. 68, 4; 324, 11.

[3] During the earlier part of his life. In the period following his return from Baghdád he seems to have been comparatively well off. Cf. the last paragraph of this section.

The 'Abbásid Caliphs had long ceased to govern[1], though their spiritual authority was acknowledged by most of the independent princes who supplanted them. In Baghdád the Buwayhids, a Persian dynasty, held absolute sway; and while they extended their power over western and southern Persia, another Persian house, the Sámánids, maintained themselves in Khurásán and Transoxania until they were dispossessed by the Turkish Ghaznevids. Ma'arrí did not live to see the western advance of the Seljúqs, who had occupied Baghdád in A.D. 1055, three years before his death; Aleppo and Damascus fell into their hands about fifty years later. For him the political storm-centre was Cairo, which since its foundation in A.D. 969 had been the capital of the Fáṭimid dynasty. The Fáṭimids, according to their own story, stood in the direct line of descent from the Prophet through his daughter Fáṭima; consequently they regarded the 'Abbásid Caliphs (who descended from the Prophet's uncle) as usurpers and claimed the title and prerogatives of the Caliphate by right divine. Their real ancestor was 'Abdulláh ibn Maymún al-Qaddáḥ, the son of a Persian oculist. He belonged to the Ismá'ílí sect, a branch of the Shí'ites which recognises seven Imáms, or pontiffs, of the Prophet's House, the last of these being Muḥammad ibn Ismá'íl (*ob. circa* A.D. 770). Exploiting the Shí'ite belief that the Imám, although he may vanish and remain hidden for a time, will one day return to fill the earth with justice, 'Abdulláh set a vast conspiracy in train. His methods of propaganda have been described as grotesque, audacious, and satanic; but whatever we think of their morality, we must be profoundly impressed by the genius displayed in them[2]. In A.D. 909, thirty-four years after the death of 'Abdulláh ibn Maymún, his grandson appeared amongst the Berbers of North Africa, announcing himself under the name of 'Ubaydulláh as the promised Mahdí and giving out that he was a descendant of the Imám Muḥammad

[1] Cf. *Luzúm*, I. 131, 6: "The state of Islam is so contemptible that its chief (the 'Abbásid Caliph) is become a falcon for falconers or a dog for huntsmen."

[2] See Professor Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, vol. I. p. 394 fol. and 410 foll.

ibn Ismá'íl. This 'Ubaydulláh founded the Fáṭimid dynasty in Tunis, and his successors, advancing eastward, conquered Egypt and Syria as far as Damascus (A.D. 969–70). If the rule of the Fáṭimids "was on the whole, despite occasional acts of cruelty and violence inevitable in that time and place, liberal, beneficent, and favourable to learning[1]," the Ismá'ílí doctrines bore other fruit which was deadly enough to excuse the worst construction that could be put upon them. I refer to the Carmathians and the so-called Assassins. During the tenth century the Carmathians (*Qarámiṭa*)—originally the followers of an Ismá'ílí missionary, Ḥamdán Qarmaṭ—ravaged, plundered, and massacred in many lands of Islam; in A.D. 930 they even sacked Mecca and carried off the Black Stone from the Ka'ba. They paid a somewhat inconstant homage to the Fáṭimid Caliphs, whose secret diplomacy used them for its own ends and directed their operations, though the alliance was disavowed officially.

At the date of Ma'arrí's birth northern Syria, including Aleppo and Ma'arra, was held by a successor of the famous Ḥamdánid prince, Sayfu 'l-Dawla; but the Fáṭimids were already beginning to threaten it from the south. The struggle went on with varying fortune for about ninety years. It raged most fiercely round Aleppo, which passed to and fro from the Ḥamdánids to the Fáṭimids and from the Fáṭimids to a Bedouin dynasty, the Banú Mirdás. On one occasion the Ḥamdánid Abu 'l-Faḍá'il "endeavoured to obtain the help of the Greek emperor against the Egyptian invaders, and such help was readily given, since the maintenance of Antioch in Christian hands depended on the possibility of playing off one Moslem power against the other. Aleppo after a siege of thirteen months by 'Azíz's general was set free by the timely aid of the Emperor Basil[2]." Thus Ma'arrí lived all his life in the shadow of war and was familiar with its horrors and miseries. Once at least he came forward as peace-maker. The historian al-Qifṭí relates that in A.D. 1027, when Ṣáliḥ ibn Mirdás, the governor of Aleppo, besieged Ma'arra and

[1] See Professor Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, vol. I. p. 399.
[2] Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, *Cairo, Jerusalem, and Damascus*, p. 27 fol.

bombarded it with a catapult (*manjaníq*), the terrified inhabitants implored Ma'arrí to intercede with him. "Abu 'l-'Alá went forth, leaning on a guide. Ṣáliḥ was told that the gate of the town had been thrown open and that a blind man was being led out. He gave orders to cease fighting. 'It is Abu 'l-'Alá,' said he: 'let us see what he wants.' He received the poet courteously, granted his request, and asked him to recite some poetry. Abu 'l-'Alá improvised a few verses which occur in the *Luzúmiyyát*[1]." Another version of the incident is not so picturesque but seems more probable. Ṣáliḥ had arrested seventy notables of Ma'arra, and Abu 'l-'Alá was sent to plead for their release, a task which he successfully accomplished[2].

The prevailing anarchy fostered social and economic disorders of the gravest kind, and these in turn provoked fresh outbreaks of lawlessness. Here are some extracts from the annals of this period: they may help the reader to imagine what it was like.

*Anno* 982–3: It is said that on account of the civil wars between the 'Abbásid and the Fáṭimid Caliphs no one made the pilgrimage from 'Iráq (to Mecca) during the years 982–90. There were no pilgrims from 'Iráq in the years 1002, 1008, 1010, 1017–21, etc., etc. Bands of Carmathians and Bedouins infested the caravan routes, robbing travellers or levying

[1] *Dhikrá Abi 'l-'Alá*, p. 66. The verses referred to (*Luzúm*, I. 302, 3) are not complimentary either to Ṣáliḥ or to the people of Ma'arra:

I remained in seclusion a long while, unblamed and unenvied.
When all but the least part of my life had passed, and my soul was doomed
to quit the body (soon),
I was sent as an intercessor to Ṣáliḥ—and the plan of my fellow-townsmen
was a bad one;
For he heard from me the cooing of a dove, and I heard from him the
roaring of a lion.
Let me not be pleased with this hypocrisy: how often does an hour of
tribulation make dear what was cheap before! (*i.e.* if my fellow-
citizens honoured me, it was only from self-interest: they thought I
could serve them in a crisis).

[2] The events which caused Ma'arrí to undertake this mission are related by Professor Margoliouth in his Introduction to the *Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, p. 33; cf. *Luzúm*, I. 355, 14 foll. If Ṣáliḥ really besieged Ma'arra, we must suppose that the town had revolted against him in consequence of his tyrannical act. The *Luzúm* makes no allusion to a siege.

blackmail. A certain Badr ibn Ḥasanawayh paid 5000 dínárs every year to the brigand al-Uṣayfir "as compensation for what he used to take from the pilgrims." In 998 the caravan from 'Iráq was intercepted by Abu 'l-Jarráḥ al-Ṭá'í, who demanded 9000 dínárs from Raḍí and Murtaḍá, the Sharífs of Baghdád, before he would allow it to proceed[1].

*Anno* 983–4: The price of wheat in 'Iráq rose to an enormous figure, and "a great number of people died of hunger on the road." In 992 at Baghdád a pound of bread cost 40 dirhems, and a walnut 1 dirhem. In 1047 Mosul, Mesopotamia, and Baghdád were devastated by famine and pestilence: the number of dead reached 300,000. In 1056 (a year or two before Ma'arrí's death) "plague and famine spread over Baghdád, Syria, and Egypt and the whole world, and the people were eating their dead[2]."

*Anno* 1009: Abú 'Abdallah al-Qummí al-Miṣrí the cloth-merchant died, leaving a fortune of one million dínárs, exclusive of goods, merchandise, and jewels[3].

*Anno* 1002–3: An earthquake destroyed multitudes in the 'Awáṣim (the province to which Ma'arra belonged) and the frontier lands of Syria. In 1033–4 a third part of Ramla was demolished by an earthquake: "the sea ebbed to a distance of three *farsakhs* (about nine miles), and the people went down to fish; then it rolled back upon them and all who could not swim were drowned." During Ma'arrí's lifetime there were similar disasters at Dínawar, Tabríz, Tadmor, and Baalbec[4].

It would be tedious to lengthen this list by giving details, for example, of the bloody religious conflicts in Baghdád and 'Iráq, where authority was divided between a Sunnite Pope and a Shí'ite Emperor. Of course, such records mean little unless we can regard them as typical. The present case, I think, fulfils that condition in the sense that the symptoms noted above were not isolated or sporadic but continually recurred and affected the welfare of whole provinces and populations. Concerning the deeper causes of the disease—

[1] Abu 'l-Maḥásin ibn Taghríbirdí, *al-Nujúmu 'l-Záhira* (ed. Popper), vol. II. pp. 30, 56, 85.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 33, 50, 206, 219.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 106.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 91, 101, 162, 198.

slavery, polygamy, the decay of religion, the unequal distribution of wealth, etc.—we learn more from Ma'arrí than from the Moslem chronicles.

Literature does not always flourish under a strong central government or languish under a weak one. The damage inflicted by the break-up of the 'Abbásid Caliphate was to a great extent repaired by the dynasties which succeeded it. The courts of Aleppo, Bukhárá, Ghazna, and other cities became rival seats of literary culture. Every prince gathered poets and scholars around him, if not for love of learning—and this was no rarity—then in order to gratify his self-esteem and assure his prestige. Islamic literature, hitherto confined to the language of the Koran, was enriched by Persians writing in their own tongue. It is true that as science and philosophy developed, poetry and literature declined: the genius of the age was constructive rather than creative, and the materials with which its writers worked were largely foreign. From that standpoint we may call it decadent if we please; but though it lacked the brilliance of the epoch which expired with Sayfu 'l-Dawla seven years before Ma'arrí was born, it produced many authors of distinction and some of world-wide fame. Our poet numbered among his contemporaries Firdawsí and Avicenna; Bírúní, the historian of India, 'Utbí, the biographer of Sultan Maḥmúd, and Badí'u 'l-Zamán al-Hamadhání, inventor of a new form of romance which was brought to perfection by Ḥarírí; the scholastic theologians Báqilání and Ibn Ḥazm, the critic Ibn Rashíq, the anthologist Tha'álibí, and the defender of orthodox Ṣúfism Abu 'l-Qásim al-Qushayrí.

The *Luzúm* contains several references to political affairs in Syria and elsewhere. In the following poem Ma'arrí laments the fatal blow dealt to the house of 'Abbás by the Buwayhid occupation of Baghdád (A.D. 945–1055).

( 106 )

Shun mankind and live alone, so wilt thou neither do injustice nor suffer it.

Thou wilt find that even though Fortune be favourable, there is no escape from her all-destroying onslaught.

Were al-Manṣúr raised from the dead, he would cry, "No peace unto thee, O City of peace![1]

The sons of Háshim dwell in the desert, and their empire has passed to the Daylamites[2].

If I had known that they would come to this at last, I would not have killed Abú Muslim[3].

He had been a loyal servant of my dynasty, and it robed him in the dark raiment[4]."

Another poem describes the defeat of the Fáṭimids by Ṣáliḥ ibn Mirdás and his Bedouin allies.

(107)

I see that Ṣáliḥ has got possession of Aleppo, and Sinán has attacked Damascus,

While Ḥassán, leading the two clans of Ṭayyi', bends his course from Ghazza on a piebald steed.

When their horsemen saw the dust-clouds grey as *thaghám*[5] hanging over their host,

They threw themselves on the mosque of Ramla, which suffered outrage and was smeared with blood.

And it boots not the damsel taken captive that skulls were split on a keen sword-blade (for her sake).

Many a victim fell unavenged and forgotten; many a prisoner was shackled and never set free.

How many a one did they leave lonely, bereft of wife and child!

How many a rich man did they leave poor!

He goes amongst the tribe, inquiring after his property; but what avails talking about a bird that is flown?[6]

Although Ma'arrí sympathised with the 'Abbásids and disliked the Fáṭimids[7], prudence as well as inclination de-

[1] Baghdád, founded by al-Manṣúr, the second 'Abbásid Caliph, in A.D. 762.

[2] "The sons of Háshim" are the 'Abbásids; the Daylamites are the Buwayhids.

[3] See my *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 251 fol.

[4] *Luzúm*, II. 316, 3. "The dark raiment" probably refers to the official costume of the 'Abbásids, which was black; not, as Von Kremer thinks, to the shroud.

[5] Probably a kind of feathery grass (see Sir C. Lyall's translation of the *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, p. 62, and Index under Hair).

[6] II. 133, 10.

[7] Cf. I. 71, 2–3, "A proud and mighty dynasty came o'er them and they were made captive in its error. They supposed that some persons (the Imáms) are immaculate, but I swear they are not pure."

tached him from the political and religious controversies of his time, so that he was able to keep on friendly terms with moderate men in either camp[1]. Naturally, this does not prevent him from criticising the doctrine of the extreme Shí'ites, especially their veneration of the Imáms and their expectation of a Mahdí. He also ridicules their claim to possess an apocalyptic book[2].

( 108 )

The dead monarch[3] will return if his grandfather, Ma'add[4], shall
return to you, or his father, Nizár[5].
No intelligent man believes that there is at Kúfán (Kúfa) a tomb
of the Imám which pilgrims visit (in the hope of witnessing
his resurrection)[6].
The truly religious is he that hates evil and girds his loins with a
band and waist-cloth of innocence[7].

( 109 )

Ye have gotten a long, long shrift, O kings and tyrants,
And still ye work injustice hour by hour.
What ails you that ye tread no path of glory?
A man may take the field, tho' he love the bower.

But some hope an Imám with voice prophetic
Will rise amidst the silent ranks agaze.
An idle thought! There's no Imám but Reason
To point the morning and the evening ways[8].

( 110 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Astrologers still go on foretelling a prince of faith
Amidst the enshrouding mirk to rise like a lonely star;
For none shall unite the state disjointed, except a man
Made perfect, who beats red-hot the cold iron, bar on bar[9].

[1] *E.g.* he dedicated some of his works to the Fáṭimid governors of Aleppo (*Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, Introd., p. 31). [2] *Luzúm*, I. 390, 13.

[3] The Fáṭimid Caliph, Ḥákim bi-amri'llah (*ob.* A.D. 1020). Cf. with this verse *Luzúm*, II. 243, 10–12.

[4] Mu'izz Abú Tamím Ma'add (*ob.* A.D. 975).

[5] 'Azíz Abú Manṣúr Nizár (*ob.* A.D. 996).

[6] Cf. the verses of the Shí'ite poet, Di'bil b. 'Alí, cited by Mas'údí (*Murúju 'l-Dhahab*, ed. Barbier de Meynard, vol. VI. p. 195).

[7] *Luzúm*, I. 315, 10. [8] I. 65, 4. [9] I. 278, 12.

Von Kremer (*op. cit.*, p. 60) misunderstands this passage and attributes to Ma'arrí the belief in a man of blood and iron, who alone could re-establish order and security ("in einem Manne, der mit 'Blut und Eisen' wieder die Ordnung herstellt"). The second couplet certainly expresses such a belief, but it forms part of the prediction which Ma'arrí means to discredit. The world-saviour, the man of the mailed fist, is the Carmathian Imám—the last person our poet expected or desired to see, though the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in A.D. 1047 raised high hopes of his advent[1]. Let me quote a parallel passage:

(III)

And there shall rise amongst mankind a king
Like to an angel that torments the wicked,
His hands cunning to slaughter: he shall smite
With the cold iron adversaries all.
They said, "A just Imám shall come to rule us
And shoot our enemies with a piercing shaft."
This earth, the home of mischief and despite,
Did never yield a single day's delight[2].

There speaks the pessimist, taught by hard experience that "Man never is, but always to be, blest."

While Ma'arrí has nothing to say either for or against the Fáṭimid government as such, he denounces fanaticism wherever he finds it; and in his country and age it was rampant everywhere—"men (he observes) take the opposite direction to Right: they are extreme Shí'ites or bigoted Sunnís[3]." Alluding to the Caliph Ḥákim, who pretended to be an incarnation of God, he declares that the worst of mankind is a monarch who wishes his subjects to worship him[4]. The Carmathians are bitterly attacked for their impiety and im-

[1] That the poet refers to the Carmathians is made clear by the mention of Saturn in the following verse (*Luzúm*, I. 278, 14). Cf. I. 279, 12: "If they (the Carmathians) revere Saturn, I revere One of whom Saturn is the most ancient worshipper."

[2] *Luzúm*, I. 296, 8.

[3] I. 408, 9:

والناس فى ضدّ الهدى متشيّعٌ * لزم الغُلُوَّ وناصبىٌّ شارى

[4] II. 200, last line.

morality. We do not know how far Ma'arrí's description of their tenets is trustworthy: in the *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán*, where he relates many anecdotes concerning this detested sect[1], he mentions that his information was partly derived from those who had travelled in districts under Carmathian rule.

(112)

Will not ye fear God, O partisans of (one like) Musaylima?[2] for ye have transgressed in obedience to your lusts.
Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan—and how many a one amongst you is a follower of footsteps![3]
Ye adopted the opinions of the Dualists (Zoroastrians)[4] after the sweetness of Unity (Islam) had flowed on your palates;
And in resistance to the creed which ye promulgated, the spears were dyed (with gore) and the blood of the horsemen was blown to and fro in the gusts of wind[5].
Even the brute beasts did not approve the crimes committed by you on your mothers and mothers-in-law.
The least (most venial) thing that ye hallowed is the throat of a wineskin which makes the whole pack of you drunk and tipsy.
Ye took 'Alí as a shield (to justify yourselves), though he always punished (his subjects) for drinking wine, even in sips.
We questioned some Magians as to the real nature of their religion.
They replied, "Yes: we do not wed our sisters.
That, indeed, was originally permitted in Magianism, but we count it an error[6].
We reject abominable things and love to adore the light of the sun at morning."

* * * * *

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1902, p. 338 foll.

[2] The text has "Musallam" or "Musallim." I read "Musaylim," an abbreviation of Musaylima, the false prophet, whose doctrines resembled those which are here ascribed to the Carmathians. The curtailed form of his name occurs in a Persian poem by 'Unṣurí (Dawlatsháh, *Tadhkiratu 'sh-Shu'arâ*, ed. by E. G. Browne, p. 46, l. 8).

[3] *I.e.* an imitator of others. According to Ma'arrí, the mass of mankind are enslaved by habit and tradition.

[4] For an explanation of this statement see *al-Farq bayna 'l-firaq* (Cairo, 1910), p. 269 foll. and p. 277. See corr.

[5] *I.e.* the slaughter was so great that the blood lay on the ground in pools.

[6] Which proves that it is better to be a Zoroastrian than a Carmathian.

Ye treated the Koran with contempt when it came to you, and paid no heed to the Fast and the canonical prayers.
Ye expected an Imám, a misguided one, to appear at the conjunction of the planets; and when it passed, ye said, "(His coming is put off) for a few years[1]."

There is no evidence that Ma'arrí was acquainted with the higher teaching of the Ismá'ílís; and although it has been called "une espèce de culte de la raison[2]," we can feel sure that, so far as it preserved any positive character, it would have been entirely repugnant to him. Most of the poems in which they are mentioned lay stress on their violations of law and religion, but he also charges them with revolutionary aims—"the desire, namely, to destroy the power of the Arabs and the religion of Islam whence that power was derived[3]."

(113)

Whenever ye see a band of Hajarites[4], their advice to the people is, "Forsake the mosques!"
Time hides a secret which (when it is disclosed) will suddenly put to sleep all who are awake or arouse all who slumber.
They say that the influence of the conjunction of the planets will ruin the religious institutions established by the noblest leaders of men,
And that, when the heavenly fate descends, the spear of the armed champion (of Islam) will produce no more effect (on his enemies) than motes in a sunbeam.
If Islam has been overtaken by calamities which lowered its prestige, yet none ever saw the like of it[5].
And if they revere Saturn, I revere One of whom Saturn is the most ancient worshipper[6].

[1] *Luzúm*, I. 182, 5. For some time before A.D. 1047 it was proclaimed that the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in that year would mark the final triumph of the Fáṭimids over the 'Abbásids. Cf. *Luzúm*, II. 129, 8–9 translated in my *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, p. 322).

[2] By De Goeje, *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides*, p. 163. [3] Professor Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, vol. I. p. 406.

[4] Hajar in Baḥrayn was the Carmathian capital.

[5] These are the words of a patriotic Moslem. Von Kremer's rendering, "none ever saw a calamity like this (Carmathian) one" (*ZDMG.* vol. 38, p. 500) seems inadmissible.

[6] *Luzúm*, I. 279, 7.

( 114 )

The religions of every people have come down to us after a system
which they themselves contrived.
And some of them altered the doctrines of others, and intelligent
minds perceived the falsity of that which they affirmed to be
true.
Do not rejoice when thou art honoured amongst them, for oft have
they exalted a base man and held him in honour.
The external rites of Islam have been changed by a sect who
sought to wound it and lopped away its branches.
And what they have spoken is (only) the prelude to a great event,
as poets begin their encomia with love-songs;
For it is rumoured that on a certain day they that lie buried in the
earth shall arise[1].

With one exception, which will be noticed presently, our author's general views on government are quite orthodox.

( 115 )

Fear kings and willingly yield obedience to them, for the king is a
rain-cloud that waters the earth.
If they are unjust, yet they are of great use to society: how often
have they defended thee with infantry and cavalry!
And did the emperors of Persia and the princes of Ghassán abstain
from tyranny and oppression aforetime?
Horses set free to graze go their own way: nothing holds them in
check but bridles, which gall them, and reins[2].

( 116 )

Sovereignty is fire: beneficial, if moderate, but harmful and con-
suming, if it transgress.
And nearness to it is the sea: if it bring thee gain, yet there is
danger of death by drowning[3].

It is not remarkable that an Oriental writer should plead for just and rational government[4] or point out that kings have duties as well as rights; but unless I am mistaken,

[1] II. 404, 2. Cf. II. 427, 3: "They expected that an Imám would arise to abrogate the law laid down by the Prophet."

[2] II. 371, 1.

[3] II. 121, 12.

[4] Cf. II. 21, 4.

Ma'arrí is alone in anticipating the modern democratic theory that the heads of the state are its paid servants.

( 117 )

My stay (in the world) is wearisome: how long shall I associate
with a people whose princes command what is not good
for it?
They wronged their subjects and allowed themselves to deceive
them and neglected their interests, although they are their
hirelings[1].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 118 )

If well we consider things, they surely disclose to us
Their secret: the people's prince is servant of those he rules[2].

( 119 )

Leave mankind to do as they please, for if thou look'st, (thou wilt
see that) their king resembles a hired slave, who returned
(from his work) in the evening.
The shade of acacia-trees whither thou resortest for shelter makes
thee independent of him that asks gold in payment of the
house (thou dwellest in) and the stones (with which it is
built)[3].

In two of these passages (Nos. 118 and 119) the maxim *rex seruus populi* is used as an argument for asceticism. The poor hermit enjoys greater happiness and freedom than the most powerful monarch.

Ma'arrí spares none of the ruling classes, and we cannot but wonder how such a contemptuous and outspoken critic escaped punishment. His lash falls cuttingly on princes and military governors, but with particular severity on the *'ulamá*, that is to say, on those who represent the legal and religious authority in the Moslem state.

( 120 )

They guide affairs the way of fools;
Their power ends, another rules.
Oh, fie on life and fie on me
And this ignoble sovereignty![4]

[1] I. 55, 6. [2] II. 260, 10. [3] I. 384, 11. [4] II. 23, 9.

( 121 )

'Tis sadness enough that all the righteous are gone together and
that we are left alone to inhabit the earth.
Truly, for a long while 'Iráq and Syria have been two ciphers: the
king's power in them is an empty name[1].
The people are ruled by devils invested with absolute authority:
in every land there is a devil in the shape of a governor—
One who does not care though all the folk starve, if he can pass
the night drinking wine with his belly full[2].

( 122 )

Never the cup rested idle in the cupbearer's hand,
But when thy bloated paunch was threatening to burst.
In the morning ankle-wise juts out thy belly,
Drink-swollen, thy head with riot split like a mazard[3].

( 123 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)
Cleave thou to the act and deed of virtue, were all it brings
Of vantage to thee at last its fair sound in ears of men.
So sure as thou liv'st, there's none that flees from the world in
sooth,
Not even the eremites of Christendom in their cells.
The princes of humankind are worser than all the rest,
When like unto hovering hawks they swoop down and snatch
their prey.
A ruler in every land: if one by God's help goes straight,
Another perverts the course of justice to vilest ends.
The property he by fraud removes from its rightful hands—
Then burst forth in overflow the waters of weeping eyes;
Around him a legal crew with visages bleak as crags
Which never were softer made by plenteously-gushing rains[4].

Ma'arrí's opinion of the *'ulamá* (Moslem divines) is briefly expressed in the verse—

With wakeful grief the pondering mind must scan
Religion made to serve the pelf of Man—[5]

[1] "The king" referred to is the 'Abbásid Caliph.
[2] *Luzúm*, II. 335, 5. [3] I. 87, 9. [4] II. 90, 4.
[5] II. 129, 10:

مَذاهِبُ جعلوها من معايشهم * من يُعْمِلِ الفكرَ فيها تُعْطِهِ الأَرَقا

and is best illustrated by the poems which give us his views on that subject. Meanwhile a few specimens may find a place here.

( 124 )

I take God to witness that the souls of men are without intelligence, like the souls of moths.
They said, "A divine!" but the divine is an untruthful disputatious person, and words are wounds[1].

( 125 )

There are robbers in the desert, camel-rievers,
Robbers too in mosque and market may be seen;
And the name of these is notary and merchant,
While the others bear the name of "Bedaween[2]."

( 126 )

What man was ever found to be a cadi and to refrain from giving judgments like the judgment of Sadúm?[3]
Things insensible bear no burden of calamity: does it trouble rocks that they are hewn with an adze?[4]

( 127 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Who knows? Some that fill the mosque with terror whene'er they preach
No better may be than some that drink to a tavern-tune.
If God's public worship serve them only to engine fraud,
Then nearer to Him are those forsaking it purposely.
Let none vaunt himself who soon returns to an element
Of clay which the potter takes and cunningly moulds for use.
A vessel, if so it hap, anon will be made of him,
From whence any common churl at pleasure may eat and drink;
And he, unaware the while, transported from land to land—
O sorrow for him! his bones have crumbled, he wanders on[5].

[1] II. 262, last line.
[2] I. 87, last line. Cf. II. 90, 10.
[3] The name Sadúm (Sodom) is applied by Moslems both to the city and to its wicked judge.
[4] *Luzúm*, II. 297, 6. In these poems Ma'arrí often says that he longs for anaesthesia to relieve him of the pain of life. Cf. *Luzúm*, I. 295, 7–8 (translated in my *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, p. 323); II. 123, 1 foll.; 130, penult.
[5] I. 81, 12.

( 128 )

For his own sordid ends
The pulpit he ascends,
And though he disbelieves in resurrection,
Makes all his hearers quail
Whilst he unfolds a tale
Of Last Day scenes that stun the recollection[1].

( 129 )

They recite their sacred books, although the fact informs me that
these are a fiction from first to last.
O Reason, thou (alone) speakest the truth. Then perish the fools
who forged the (religious) traditions or interpreted them!
A Rabbi[2] is no heretic[3] amongst his disciples, if he sets a high
price on stories which he invented.
He only desired to marry women and amass riches by his lies[4].

( 130 )

Softly! thou hast been deceived, honest man as thou art, by a
cunning knave who preaches to the women.
Amongst you in the morning he says that wine is forbidden, but
he makes a point of drinking it himself in the evening[5].

The lay professions are not forgotten. At the head of those who prey on human folly and superstition come the astrologers; and of them Ma'arrí speaks with an indignation corresponding to the almost universal faith in their predictions and to the very important part which they played in Moslem life, both public and private[6].

[1] II. 202, 2. Cf. Koran, 22, 2: "(on the Last Day) every woman who giveth suck shall forget the infant which she suckleth." Ma'arrí describes the popular preachers (*quṣṣáṣ*) as corruptors of the true religion and demands that stern measures should be taken to suppress them (II. 77, 5 foll.).

[2] With manifest irony the poet uses here the word *ḥabr*, which properly denotes a *non*-Moslem doctor of divinity.

[3] *I.e.* he does nothing new or extraordinary.

[4] *Luzúm*, II. 196, 3.

[5] I. 61, 11.

[6] See the *Chahár Maqála* of Niẓámí 'Arúdí, translated by Prof. E. G. Browne, p. 88 foll.; and cf. the remarks of De Goeje, *Mémoire sur les Carmathes*, p. 119 foll.

( 131 )

Could I command obedience, never in life
Astrologer had shamed the causeway's crown.
Be he blind churl or keen-eyed reprobate,
From him pours falsehood without stint or stay.
He with his arrows gets to work betimes[1]
And turns his astrolabe and tells a fortune.
The foolish woman stopped, and 'twas as though,
Stopping, she rushed into a lion's den.
She asks him questions—of a husband changed
Towards her: he starts writing with *riqán*[2]
In characters distinct. "Thy name?" quoth he,
"Ay, and thy mother's? Verily, I can
Expound by cogitation things unseen."
He swears the genies do frequent his house,
Submissive one and all, whether they speak
Clear Arabic or barbarous gibberish.
This fellow plies his craft in many a land,
The while at home his wife eats food she loathes.
What! hath a man no means of livelihood
Except the morsels thrown him by the stars?
To pelt o'er deserts with a caravan
Is trade more honourable than gains like these
Of one who, were he stoned, would justly die.
Ah me, the thoughts that boil within my breast!
I keep them close and simmering under lid.
'Tis marvellous, when the rack has done its worst,
The miscreant with drawn and tongueless mouth
Recants not ever. What escape for us?
Earth is a raging sea, the sky o'erflowing
With cloudbursts of calamity, the time
Corrupt: nor truth puts out a first spring-leaf
Amongst mankind, nor error fades away.
Saddle and bridle, that thou quick mayst flee:
They all are saddled and bridled for thine harm.
And bright is Good, but thither hasteneth none;
And dark is Ill, and thence doth none retire.
They smile upon thee if thou bring'st them lies;

[1] Arrows were used in playing games of hazard.
[2] Henna or saffron.

Speak truth and lo, they furiously fling stones.
Thy sourness unto them defends thee from them:
Whene'er thou art sweet, they run at thee to bite[1].

( 132 )

She is gone out early in her boots and mantle to consult the blind
astrologer;
But he cannot tell her what she wants to know, for he is ignorant,
nor has he wit enough to make a guess.
"To-morrow," says he, "or afterwards there will be a steady fall
of rain: if it pour abundantly, it will be a great help."
He induces the blockheads of the quarter to believe that he can
read the secrets of the unseen world,
Although, if they asked him about something on his own breast[2],
he would answer falsely or mutter in silence[3].

( 133 )

She questioned her astrologer about
The child in cradle—"How long will it live?"
"A hundred years," cries he, to earn a drachma,
And death came to her boy within the month.
Changed times! when fair young women seek a husband,
Offering high sums to furnish his due dower[4].

* * * * *

The fool dislikes his daughters, though his son
Brings worse destruction than his son-in-law.
I view as man's most bitter enemy
A son, the proper issue of his loins,
Howbeit in his folly he believes
The mares outmatched in racing by his colt[5].

Astrology, of course, ranked as a science and was often practised by celebrated Moslem astronomers, but the "astrologers" to whom Ma'arrí refers are evidently vulgar fortune-tellers and impostors of evil reputation[6], who seem to have found their *clientèle* chiefly in the more credulous sex. The type is familiar and not without variety.

[1] *Luzúm*, II. 269, 5.

[2] Cf. II. 97, 8:
They tell our fortunes by the stars, but ask them
Where settles on themselves a gnat—they know not.

[3] II. 284, 2.

[4] See p. 87, note 4.

[5] I. 399, 16.

[6] Cf. II. 415, 8–9.

( 134 )

All of us know the astrologer, all of us know the physician:
One hath his almanack still, and the other his pharmacopoeia;
Flattering our troubles away—and who doesn't want to be flattered?—
Laying a snare for the prodigal youth or e'er he grow wiser[1].

( 135 )

Over the earth from land to land you drifted,
Some yielding more of bounty's rain, some less;
Against the yelping curs your staff you lifted,
Amazed were they at your stout-heartedness.

You dearly wished for each man's wealth and fortune,
And none so base to wish for yours was found;
You stopped at every doorway to importune,
Till Abú Ḍábiṭ[2] drove you—underground[3].

( 136 )

You cross the desert, a good chance sends you diet;
You roam around, and so your living's made;
You beg your bread in the name of "holy quiet,"
But more devout is he that plies his trade.
Abandon flesh for the oil of olive-trees,
And fare on wild-figs, not to rob the bees![4]

( 137 )

Thy thought kindled a fire that showed beside thee
A path whilst thou wert seeking light to guide thee.
Stargazers, charmers, soothsayers are cheats,
All of that sort a cunning greed dissemble:
Howbeit the aged beggar's hand may tremble,
It none the less lies open for receipts[5].

[1] II. 48, last line.

[2] Death. This *kunya*, which has the force of an epithet and signifies one who lays violent hands on his victims and holds them fast, is said (according to the commentator here) to be "a name for Death in the language of the Abyssinians." Mr McLean, however, writes to me: "Ethiopic has the verb ፀሐጠ (= ضبط) in the sense of 'take firm hold of,' 'seize.'...But I cannot find trace of any compound with *aba* ('father of') similar to the one you cite in Arabic. Such expressions are comparatively uncommon in Ethiopic."

[3] *Luzúm*, II. 73, 5. [4] II. 99, 3. [5] II. 51, 3.

The poets are stigmatised as frivolous and immoral[1]; and Ma'arrí austerely dissociates himself from them.

( 138 )

O sons of Learning, ever were ye lured
By rhetoric empty as the buzz of flies.
Your poets are very wolves—the robber's way
They take in panegyric and love-song,
Doing their friends worse injury than foes;
And when they verses write, out-thieve the rat.
I lend you praise repaid with praise as false,
Whence 'tis as though between us taunts had passed.
Shall I let run to waste my time of eld
Amongst you, squandered like my days of youth?

* * * * *

Fine eloquence I do cast off from my tongue,
Resigning to the Arabs who have wit
Base occupations uncommendable,
Whereof the whole return is utter loss.
Leave me, that I may babble in vain no more
But, waiting Death, close on myself my door[2].

The *Luzúm* throws many a side-light on the state of contemporary Moslem society. Granted that the author is an ascetic as well as a pessimist, the corruption which he describes was real and deeply rooted, though less extensive than his poems suggest. Wine-drinking[3] and female luxury[4] are favourite topics. He condemns polygamy as being an injustice to the wives[5] and is fully aware of the evils which flow from it. Family life was embittered. Harems filled with foreign slaves produced a hybrid race, adding new vices to the old[6]. The Arabs no longer ruled, the Arabic language had

[1] Cf. I. 55, last line and fol.

[2] I. 137, 7.

[3] I. 125, 5; 144, 6; 146, 3; 195, 9; 299, 9; 340, 6; II. 299, 1, 10; 312, 14; 344, 9; 361, 11, etc.

[4] See especially two long poems in which Ma'arrí sets forth his views on the education, marriage, and morals of women (I. 163, 2–168, 4 and 188, 2–194, last line).

[5] I. 377, 2.

[6] II. 4, last line.

become debased[1]; the influence of Jews and Christians was such that often a Moslem would place himself under their protection. As for religion, even its outward forms had fallen into contempt. References to some of these points are given below, while others are illustrated by the following poems or the parts of them printed in italics.

( 139 )

Live a miser like the rest of us in these degenerate days,
And pretend to be a churl, for lo, the world hath churlish ways.
*A people of iniquity; sons against fathers rub,*
*And the fierce cub rends the lion and the lion eats his cub.*
Wouldst thou fain bestow a kindness on any gentle man,
Be thyself the first one chosen out to profit by the plan[2].

( 140 )

See cor.

Refrain from tears at parting, and desire
The tears, the blessed tears, by hermits shed,
Whereof a single drop puts out Hell-fire;
So by report of ear, not eye, 'tis said.

*Fear thou thy God and still beware of men*
*Garbed not as those who for religion fight.*
*They eat up all; in song and dance they then*
*Get drunk and with the loveling take delight*[3].

*Old bonds are broke: how many a Moslem strives*
*An alien's intercession to obtain!*[4]
Time, ever dealing out to human lives
Justice unjust, makes all our labour vain.
One watches through the night and ne'er arrives
At the same goal which some, unwatching, gain[5].

[1] I. 132, penult.; II. 335, 9; 338, last line: "To-day correct pronunciation is a solecism."

[2] II. 207, 4.

[3] An allusion to the lawless and dissolute dervishes who wandered in troops from place to place, calling themselves Ṣúfís.

[4] *Mu'áhid*, here rendered by "alien," properly denotes a non-Moslem whose security is guaranteed on condition of his paying a poll-tax.

[5] *Luzúm*, I. 295, 11.

( 141 )

Wealth hushes Truth and swells loud Error's voice,
To do it homage all the sects rejoice.
*The Moslem got his tax-money no more,*
*And left his mosque to find a church next door*[1].

( 142 )

Ah, woe is me for night and day whereof the months are moulded,
Twin elements of Time who ne'er his mystery hath unfolded.
Religion now is naught, its signs effaced by ages blasting:
No prayers, no ablutions pure, no alms-giving, no fasting;
And some take women dowerless in lieu of marriage lasting[2].

Leaving particular instances, let us see what is the poet's judgment on society as a whole.

( 143 )

Had Time in his course spoken, he would have reckoned every one
of us as dirt.
He would have said, "Lo, I repair to Allah[3], and ye are the foulest
obscenity.
Once I coughed you out by mistake—will ye excuse me for
coughing?"[4]

( 144 )

The world's abounding filth is shot
O'er all its creatures, all its kinds;
The evil taint even she hath got
Whose loom for her a living finds,
And tyrant-ridden peoples moan
No worse injustice than their own[5].

( 145 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)
The staff in a blind man's hand that guides him along his way
Is more kind to him than all companions and bosom-friends.
Give thou to the sons of Eve a wide room apart from thee,
For lo, 'tis an open road of unfaith they journey in.

[1] II. 78, penult. [2] I. 322, 14.
[3] *I.e.* "I acknowledge Allah, to whom I am subject."
[4] *Luzúm*, I. 202, 8. [5] II. 41, 13.

Their features if sin shall mar, then sure on the Judgment Day
Thou'lt see none but all his face is haggard and black of hue.
As often as Reason points the right course, their nature pulls
Them wrong-ward with grip intense, like one that would drag a load[1].

( 146 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

If men but knew what their sons bring with them—were there to sell
A thousand such for a copper piece, no mortal would buy.
Woe, woe to them! for within their arms they foster and rear
An evil brood, which is guile, envy, and cankering hate.

* * * * *

And ever thus have they been, Earth's people, since they were made:
Let none in ignorance say, "Degenerate they have grown."[2]

( 147 )

Nowhere we sojourned but amongst the nation
We found all sorts of men cursing their neighbours,
Stabbing and stabbed in every congregation—
Although, maybe, they combat not with sabres.
Happy the infant that set forth to leave them
And took farewell ere yet it could perceive them![3]

( 148 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

I see that the doom of Allah first bade His creatures be,
And then turned in power back upon them with nay for yea.
And o'er living men doth rule their passion in every clime,
Tho' noble they be as hawks of mettle and strong to rule.
They run yelping, cur at cur, and all for a carcase' sake—
Vile pack! and I count myself the sorriest cur of them.
We hug in our bosoms guile; yet comes not the good reward
Of Allah but unto few, the purest of us in heart.
And what son of Time deserves the praise of the eloquent?
The more they are put to proof, the larger their due of blame[4].

[1] I. 121, 9. [2] I. 251, 2. [3] II. 342, 5. [4] I. 99, penult.

( 149 )

The soul her centre hath in the highest sphere,
Unsown with bodies are the fields of air.
From one foul root our human branches strike,
And all, to eyes discerning, are alike:
Adam their ancestor, their bourne the mould,
Tho' creeds and heresies be manifold.

* * * * *

Mind makes the only difference in men,
Birds vary from the eagle to the wren[1].

( 150 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

"Good morrow!" he cries aloud, professing his love to thee,
Tho' better than he a lion tawny and stout of neck.
By neighbouring with thy friend some profit thou hop'st to gain;
Thy farness from him is in reality gainfuller.
Unless from mankind thou flee, acknowledge that one and all
Are wolves howling after prey or foxes with bark malign.
No cure for thy suffering but patience! If they commit
Iniquity, is not worse iniquity wrought by thee?
Thou early and late dost run to folly unconscionable:
The evening beholds thy sin, the morning thy wickedness.
The world's woes are like a sea: whoso from excess of thirst
Shall die, even he amidst the waters is cast to swim[2].

( 151 )

From north or south may blow the changing wind,
But where Sin leads thou never lagg'st behind.
Well, go thy way! If thirty years be spent
Without repentance, when shall man repent?[3]

( 152 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

If men were passed thro' a sieve to purge them all of their dross
No residue would at last be left behind in the sieve;
Or were the fire bidden fall upon the guilty alone,
The robes they wear 'twould refuse to touch, but feast on thei
limbs.

* * * * *

[1] II. 82, 7.

[2] I. 224, 3.

[3] I. 92, 8.

To Him the glory! for He filled all the races of men
With inspiration that leads straightway to frenzy and woe—
With sidelong looks of the eye and vain desires of the soul
And eager rush of the lips to kiss and kiss yet again[1].

( 153 )

Reason set out by hook or crook to reform the world,
But lo, mankind were past all reformation.
Whoe'er would cleanse the crow, in hope to see the sheen
Of a white wing, on him falls tribulation[2].

( 154 )

If sweet is falsehood in your mouths,
Sweeter is truth in mine.
Man's nature to refine I sought,
Which nothing could refine[3].

( 155 )

One living person looks unlike another,
But let them die, there's not a hair between them.
Time and his children's haviour whoso searches
Will deem the wide world, east and west, blameworthy;
Will find their speech a lie, their love a hatred,
Their good an ill, their benefit an insult,
Their cheerfulness a cheat, their want a plenty,
Their knowledge ignorance and their wisdom cunning.

* * * * *

Towards the farthest goal of their ambition
They pierce a way with lances through your breast-bones;
If ye are tamarisk leaves, they launch to strip you
A devastating locust-swarm of arrows.
O Grief, my nightly guest, wilt thou excuse me
Whenas thou find'st in me no strength to journey?
I cannot get me water for my thirst's ease,
Or live unless I quaff it foul and muddy.
Men are as high-peaked mountains, and as valleys
Below the sand-dunes and the pebbly ridges:
One, crazed, would fain be charmed and offers money;
Another, sober-minded, scorns the charmer[4].

[1] II. 224, 9. [2] I. 95, 1. [3] I. 95, 5. [4] II. 126, 17.

( 156 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Ay, whether I slumber sound or keep vigil in the dark,
'Tis all one to me if I my Maker obey not.
And even such are men: the sword that smites them will naught avail,
Tho' cuts of the whip serve well thy wicked old camel[1].

( 157 )

Glory to God! how men with passion fond
Or fall below the mean or run beyond!
Ears love as madly rings and drops of pearl
As wrists the bracelets that about them curl.
Some seek from sword and lance on fields hard-fought
Fortune which others from the scalpel sought.
In charity, whence grace to thee redounds,
Give, were it but a little. Pence make pounds[2].

( 158 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

To Allah complain I of a soul that obeys me not,
And then of a wicked world where no man is righteous:
Intelligence mouldering in dust, as an empty house,
But ignorance stuccoed o'er—a mansion with tenants[3].

( 159 )

The sons of Adam are fair to see,
But each and all to taste unsweet.
Their charity and piety
Draw to themselves a benefit.
A rock the best of them outvies:
It does no wrong, it tells no lies[4].

( 160 )

He knows us well, the God most high;
Our minds have long been forced to lie.
We speak in metaphor and wot
That as we say it is 'tis not[5].

[1] II. 90, last line.
[2] II. 71, 8.
[3] I. 246, penult.
[4] I. 95, 10.
[5] II. 179, 10.

( 161 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

A man's tongue is called a spear awhile and a scimitar,
And oft by a single word were necks cloven asunder.
Of mortals a multitude have gone down to drink of Life
Before us, and left but mud behind them and staleness.
A black head of hair soon Time will bleach, or the launderer
A garment—but what e'er cleansed a nature of evil?[1]

( 162 )

Body, we know, feels naught when spirit is flown:
Shall spirit feel, unbodied and alone?
And nature to disgrace swoops eager down,
But must be dragged with halters to renown.
With evil dispositions here we came:
Wicked and envious, are we then to blame?
Before your time were Earth's folk ill-behaved?
Or have their characters become depraved?[2]

( 163 )

Ne'er wilt thou meet a friend but vexes thee
And troubles all thy days
And counts thy being here calamity:
Well, such are this world's ways[3].

( 164 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

O children of Earth, there's not a man blest with righteousness
Below ground nor any save a rascal above it.
Was Adam, your ancestor, so noble in what he wrought,
Yet look ye for nobleness amongst his descendants?
The grave-dwellers, send they not a message to us, although
The words of the messengers ye hear not, unheeding?[4]

( 165 )

The purblind traveller's feet were saved from fear
Of stumbling, once they mounted on the bier.
Admire the stricken elder how he stands
Hunched o'er a staff that trembles in his hands!
When called to prayers, he must at home remain—
But walks in deserts to increase his gain[5].

[1] II. 126, 10. [2] I. 285, 8. [3] II. 275, 9. [4] II. 209, 14. [5] II. 49, 11.

We gather from these passages that Ma'arrí not only regarded human nature as evil but mankind in the mass as incorrigible and incapable of practising the virtues on which the utility of social intercourse depends. "You must choose," he says, "either a solitude like death or the company of hypocrites[1]." He himself fell far short of the complete seclusion advertised in his letter to the people of Ma'arra[2], and it is interesting to come across poems which tell us what his neighbours thought of him and he of them, how he disliked mutual compliments, how he talked to his visitors from Persia and Arabia, and so forth. He confesses that the truth cannot be spoken in society without giving offence and that he felt obliged to behave as every one else did[3].

( 166 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

I simulate unto thee—may Allah forgive my fault!
The whole world's religion too is but simulation.
And often a man belies the thought of his dearest friend,
Tho' fair his demeanour be, his countenance comely.
If Allah they worship not—my people—with faith entire,
Him only, I cut myself clean off from my people[4].

( 167 )

I play the hypocrite with men. Truly, they are an affliction to me,
and would that my deliverance from them were near at hand!
He that lives without flattering those in his company is a bad companion to his friends and intimates.
How many a friend would wish to hear the news of my death, yet if I am ailing, he will show regard for me and exclaim "May I be thy ransom!"[5]

[1] II. 118, 8:

تخيّرْ فامّا وحدةٌ مثل ميتة
وامّا جليسٌ فى الحياة مُنافِقُ

[2] See p. 47, *supra*.
[3] *Luzúm*, I. 66, 1; II. 139, 4.
[4] I. 47, 10.
[5] II. 372, 3.

( 168 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

The sage and the fool, what time you observe them shrewdly,
They stand but as far as kinsman apart from kinsman.
Whenever my fate shall light on me in my homeland,
Cry over my corpse and call me by name "the stranger."
Whomso I encounter, warily I address him
And show him my teeth, for none is of my persuasion[1].

( 169 )

I mark the false smiles they deliver
To me o'erwhelmed with Fate's whole quiver.
Neighbours, not friends; like Z and D,
Which never meet in symphony[2].

( 170 )

Who'll rescue me from living in a town
Where I am spoken of with praise unfit?
Rich, pious, learned: such is my renown,
But many a barrier stands 'twixt me and it.

* * * * *

I owned to ignorance, yet wise was thought
By some—and is not ours a wondrous case?
For verily we all are good-for-naught:
I am not noble nor are they not base.

My body in Life's strait grip scarce bears the strain—
How shall I move Decay to clasp it round?
O the large gifts of Death! Ease after pain
He brings to us, and silence after sound[3].

( 171 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

I praised thee, and thou delighted repliedst with fair words
In payment of mine, and I was in turn delighted.
If downright give-and-take cannot be, then better
Between us vituperation than adulation[4].

[1] I. 149, penult.
[2] I. 53, 8. The letters *dhál* and *ẓá* do not occur together in Arabic.
[3] I. 97, 5.
[4] I. 222, 7.

( 172 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

Whenever a man extols me for any virtue
That I am without, his eulogy satirises.
And justly am I displeased with his false invention:
'Twould show meanness of nature to be rejoicing[1].

( 173 )

What is it in my society men seek?
I would be silent, they would have me speak.
Far must we travel ere we come in line;
They on their path are set, and I on mine[2].

( 174 )

All the world visits me: this one's native land is Yemen, this one's
home is Ṭabas[3].
They said, "We heard talk of thee." I rejoined, "Accursed above
all are they that cloak their real object."
They desire of me a fiction which I cannot invent, and if I tell
the truth, their faces darken with frowns.
God help us! Every one meets with anxiety in making his liveli-
hood. Pour over us, O sky![4]
What do ye want? I have neither money for you to beg nor
learning for you to borrow[5].
Will ye ask an ignoramus to instruct you? Will ye milk a camel
whose udder is dry?

* * * * *

I am miserable because I am unable to give you any assistance,
but the times are hard[6].

In his later years Ma'arrí suffered from the reputation of being rich[7]. No doubt he deserved it, for he must have

[1] I. 222, 10. Cf. I. 161, 8–9. [2] I. 187, 9.

[3] A Persian town situated about 200 miles south of Níshápúr on the eastern border of the Great Desert.

[4] This adage (cf. Freytag, *Arabum proverbia*, vol. I. p. 475) is here equivalent to *defunde pleno, Copia, cornu!*

[5] Cf. *Luzúm*, II. 24, 4 foll. [6] II. 15, 2.

[7] Cf. No. 170, *supra*. The Persian traveller and poet, Náṣir-i Khusraw, who passed through Ma'arra in A.D. 1047, describes Abu 'l-'Alá as a man of great wealth, having many slaves and other persons employed in working for him. This, though probably an exaggeration, is more credible than the same writer's statement that the affairs of the town were administered by Abu 'l-'Alá and his agents.

received considerable fees from the students who came in crowds to hear him, and his letters show him "in the character of a liberal man, helping persons of his own rank with gifts[1]." When he speaks of himself as poor and lets us know that in spite of his poverty he had often declined the presents which his friends offered to him[2], that is only the pessimist's self-indulgence and the ascetic's self-denial. We can believe that the demands made upon his charity justified him in protesting that he was not what rumour declared him to be[3].

## III.

### Asceticism.

Ma'arrí's "confinement to his house[4]" was his revenge upon a world which rejected him. It was not a spontaneous act of virtue: Fortune held up to his lips no enticing cup that he might thrust it away. When he said, "I'll play no more," he knew that he had already lost the game.

> What choice hath a man except seclusion and loneliness,
> When Destiny grants him not the gaining of that he craves?[5]

He is honest enough to disclaim the merit of renunciation.

> Men of acute mind call me an ascetic, but they are wrong in their diagnosis. Although I disciplined my desires, I only abandoned worldly pleasures because the best of these withdrew themselves from me[6].

This, however, is not the whole truth. Other motives springing from his character and his experience of life contributed to the decision. The blind scholar and pensioner had little cause to love society[7] and much time to meditate on its rottenness: long before visiting Baghdád he must have formed an opinion of his fellow-men which (we may presume)

[1] Introd. to the *Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, p. 33 fol.
[2] *Luzúm*, I. 81, 7; 288, 12. [3] Cf. II. 189, 14.
[4] I. 201, 4. [5] No. 47. [6] II. 352, last line and foll.
[7] Cf. I. 133, 7–8: "I lost the labour on which I spent my time, nay, my foes and despoilers carried off all that there was. I was like the handmaiden of the wine-cup who passed the night singing merrily amongst the topers, though she was not merry herself."

accorded pretty well with what he afterwards wrote. In the hour of disillusion this moral current was undammed and gave irresistible force to the feeling that he would now close accounts with them for good and all.

I was made an abstainer from mankind by my acquaintance with
them and my knowledge that created beings are dust[1].

His asceticism, though leavened by a religious element, is really the negative and individualistic side of his ethics. By abandoning an evil world he sought virtue and inward peace —*solitudinem fecit, pacem appellauit*[2]. That is the note struck in the opening verse of the *Luzúm*:

The virtuous are strangers in their native land, they are left alone
and forsaken by their kin[3].

Society demoralises. No one can live by the law of reason amongst those whom he loves or hates; no one can fear God while pursuing objects of earthly ambition[4]. So far as the poet's ideal of asceticism includes active virtue, it will be examined in the final section. We are here concerned with his world-flight, *i.e.*, such topics as the vanity of pleasure, the need for seclusion and the happiness procured by it, the excellence of poverty, contentment, humility, and patience. Some peculiar theories and practices are inculcated. Of these the most remarkable is his belief—a thoroughly rational one from the standpoint of pessimism—that procreation is a sin against the child.

( 175 )

If humankind are distinguished by moral dispositions with which
they live, yet in badness of nature all are alike.
'Twere well if every son of Eve resembled me, for what a wicked
brood did Eve bring into the world![5]

[1] I. 44, penult.
[2] Cf. II. 176, 12: فى الوحدة الراحة العظمى, "In solitude is the greatest peace."
[3] I. 43, 9:

اولو الفضل فى اوطانهم غربآء * تشذّ وتنأى عنهم القربآء

[4] I. 184, 5–6.
[5] *I.e.* it would be a good thing if all men were hermits like me.

My separation from men is a convalescence from their malady, inasmuch as association with them is a disease which infects conscience and religion.

So a verse, when it is single, cannot suffer from any fault of rhyme[1].

( 176 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

To neighbour with men meseems a sickness perpetual;
I wished, when it wore me thin, for fever that comes and goes.
By effort and self-constraint they compassed a little good;
Whatever they wrought of ill, 'twas nature that prompted it.
Oh, where are the gushing streams and oceans of bounty now?
Are those of the lion's brood that Time spared hyenas all?
Their wood in the burning yields a perfume of frankincense,
But tried on the teeth of sore necessity, proves flint-hard[2].

( 177 )

An open road to Truth lies here,
As neither slave nor lord saith nay:
Flee far from men; for com'st thou near,
'Tis like a dragged full skin which they
Use to refresh themselves withal,
Then empty 'mongst their feet let fall[3].

( 178 )

Some Power troubled our affairs—and we
Had fondly wished them from his troubling free.
Blessed are birds that pick up scattered grain,
Or wild-kine seeking green sands after rain;
Strangers to man: nor they the high-born know
Nor mounts to them the infection of the low.
War's fire raise not thou to burst ablaze,
For soon in ashes sink the hands that raise[4].

[1] I. 50, 8. He specifies three irregularities which make the rhyme defective—*iṭá*, *sinád*, and *iqwá*. See Wright's *Arabic Grammar*, vol. II. p. 356 fol.

[2] II. 86, 5. [3] I. 95, penult. [4] I. 152, 9.

( 179 )

The blind male viper hath the house he dwells in,
No more, and during life makes earth his victual.
Were a lion eyeless, ne'er he sheep at pasture
Had scared, forth-springing, or a herd of wild-kine;
Bereaved of light, never had 'Amr and 'Ámir[1]
Lifted a lance or stood on field of battle.
They ask me, "Why attend you not on Fridays
The prayers whence hope we Allah's grace and pardon?"
And get I any good when I rub shoulders
With folk whose best are but as mangy camels?
Arabs and aliens have I met full many:
Nor Arab found I worth my praise nor alien.
Death's cup how loathes the soul to drink! yet nothing
Can hinder but that some day we shall drink it.
Fortunate here are those brave lads that perish
In war amidst the thrusting and the smiting,
For 'tis a shame if the clan's chosen chieftain
Lie on his bed bewailing the sore burden.
I choke with Doom: no journey will relieve me,
Whether I take an eastern road or western.
He hunted Persia's emperors in their palace;
Reached, over broad sea and strait pass, the Caesar[2].

( 180 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

And oh, would that I had ne'er been born in a race of men
Or, being of them, had lived a savage in some bare waste!
The spring flowers he may smell for pastime and need not fear
Society's wickedness whilst all round is parching sand[3].

( 181 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

So soon as my day shall come, oh, let me be laid to rest
In some corner of the earth where none ever dug a grave!
Mankind—well, if God reward them duly for what they aimed
To do, He will ne'er bestow His mercy on dull or wise.

[1] 'Amr b. Ma'díkarib and 'Ámir b. al-Ṭufayl, famous pre-Islamic knights.

[2] I. 100, 5. "The Caesar" is the Byzantine Emperor.

[3] II. 28, 14. Cf. No. 58.

Whoso reads their inmost thoughts, perdition he deemeth it
To neighbour with any man alive or with any dead.
Ah, never may I attend amongst them the grand assize
When all shall be raised together, dusty, their heads unkempt!
When full broad and long unto the eye seems my resting-place,
Vouchsafe me of room—so guide thee Allah!—another span[1].
And touching my creed if men shall ask, 'tis but fear devout
Of Allah: nor freedom I uphold nor necessity[2].

( 182 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

Howbeit we all are pent in cities, I seem to roam
In deserts of dusty hue, bare waterless levels.
Whene'er I a poem make and sin not therein, I turn
As turns one towards his God, repentant, Labíd-like[3].

( 183 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

Oh, shake thyself clear and clean of love and knowledge of me!
My person—'tis but as motes that dance in beams of the morn.
Some dry stuff here have I thrown on embers just dying out,
And if in them be a spark, my hand will rouse them to flame.
From me the truth thou hast heard full oft, a measureless tale:
Let not thine ear cast away my counsel into the sands![4]

( 184 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

With darkness of sight there comes a darkness of faith and truth:
My far-overspreading night hath three nights within it.
And ne'er did I gnaw my hand for pleasures that stab as thorns,
Or shorten with draughts of wine my long gloomful hours.
Whenever we meet, it wakes the sad thought, "Alas, how vain
A friendship that prophesies, 'Ye meet to be parted!'"

* * * * *

[1] Cf. II. 320, 9: "I am afraid ye will assign my grave to a false infidel or a Moslem: if (on the day of Judgment) he complain of me for squeezing him, I shall say, 'It was their (the gravediggers') fault; I knew nothing about it.'"

[2] I. 350, 10.

[3] I. 281, 10. Labíd, the famous pre-Islamic poet, was a man of strong religious feeling and became a Moslem before he died. See Sir Charles Lyall's *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, p. 90 foll.

[4] I. 134, 5.

Tho' Change took so much away, it lightens my load of griefs
That lonely I suffer them, unwedded and childless.
So leave me to grapple close with fears, hard-besetting fears:
Beware, keep aloof from me—oh, halt not beside me![1]

( 185 )

(Metre: *Kámil.*)

I swear, not rich in sooth is he whom the World made rich,
Tho' he wax in pride; nor blest is he whom Fortune blessed.
Misguided fool! is he glad at heart—a mortal man—
When he hears the dove that laments for him, and the lute that mourns?[2]
His brimming cups and the mandolines of his singing-girls
Are lightning-flashes and thunderbolts of calamity[3].

( 186 )

(Metre: *Basiṭ.*)

The richest mortal is one devout that dwells on a peak,
Content with little, a scorner of tiara and silk;
The poorest man in the world a monarch who for his need
Requires a great host in arms to march with thunderous tramp[4].

( 187 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

When those whom thou sitt'st beside hear nothing but truth from thee,
They hate thee, for every friend is bent on deceiving.
The whitest of men in soul, we see them run after pelf,
As though they were crows jet-black down-dropping on seed-corn.
Let *them* seek: be thou content, and so win to wealth indeed;
Let *them* speak: be mute, and so come off with the marrow.
If absence for ever from thy kinsfolk thou canst not bear,
'Tis part of self-discipline to visit them seldom.
A man, when his hour is come, will call the physician in:
No hurry! the thing is grave—too grave to be physicked[5].

[1] II. 215, 9.

[2] Cf. the note on No. 43, last verse, and *Luzúm*, I. 256, 1: "The songs of the singing-girls in it (the world) moved me to tears, as a dirge chanted by women over their lost ones."

[3] I. 265, 2.

[4] I. 212, 5.

[5] I. 120, 12.

( 188 )

You kept the fasting months?—then why did you
Not silence keep? Without it there's no fast.
Man takes the wrong way in his first ado
With Life, and stays in it until his last[1].

( 189 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

Whenever a man from speech refraineth, his foes are few,
Although he be stricken down by fortune and fallen low.
In silence the flea doth sip its beverage of human blood,
And that silence maketh less the heinousness of its sin.
It went not therein the way the thirsty mosquito goes,
Which trumpets with high-trilled note, and thou smarting all the while.
If insolent fellow draw against thee a sword of speech,
Thy patience oppose to him, that so thou mayst break its edge[2].

( 190 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

Thy tongue is a very scorpion, and when it stingeth
Another, 'tis thou art stung by it first and foremost.
On thee is the guilt thereof, and thine a full share
Of any complaint against it by whomsoever.
It mixes a double dose for the twain of evil—
How hard are the days of him and of thee, how bitter![3]

( 191 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

My clothes are my winding-sheet, my dwelling my grave, my life
My doom; and to me is death itself resurrection.
Bedizen thee with splendidest adornment and get thee wealth!
Outshone, lady, are the likes of thee by a dust-stained
Unkempt little pilgrim-band who walk in the ways that lead
To Allah, be smooth the track they travel or rugged.
Nor bracelet nor anklet gleams amongst them on wrist or foot,
No head bears a diadem and no ear an earring[4].

In some of these poems we find references not only to "fear of God" but also to a future life. I will now cite a few more passages in which Ma'arrí uses here and there the

[1] I. 178, 4. [2] I. 128, 12. [3] I. 92, 11. [4] I. 198, 5.

language of Moslem *religious* asceticism. What significance we should attach to them must, of course, depend on our view of his real attitude towards Islam and dogmatic religion—a question too complex to be settled offhand.

( 192 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Thine is the kingdom: if Thou pardon me, 'tis Thy grace
Toward me; and if so be Thou punish, 'tis my desert.
At Thy call a man shall rise immediately from the grave
With all that he wrought of sin inscribed on his finger-joints.
Oh, there shall the hermit's staff avail more than 'Ámir's spear[1]
To succour, and shall outshine in glory the bow of Dawn[2].

( 193 )

With Life I walked in woe and strife,
Oh, what a luckless friend is Life!
In past days I have restive been,
But tame is he whom Time breaks in.
If fast and vigil mar thy face,
Wan cheeks shall win a robe of grace.
The old man creeps in listless wise,
Unlike the child that creeps to rise.
None gave me bounty and reward
Except the Lord of every lord.
Labour for Him, whilst thou hast breath,
And when thine hour comes, welcome Death![3]

( 194 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Perforce after forty years thou lead'st an ascetic life,
When all's over but the wail of women that chant thy dirge.
And how canst thou hope to earn the recompense[4]? Him we praise
Who scorneth the world's delights, a man in his lusty prime[5].

[1] See p. 128, note 1.

[2] I. 121, 5. "The bow of Dawn" is the curved rim of the sun when it first appears above the horizon.

[3] I. 119, 3.

[4] *I.e.* Paradise.

[5] I. 238, 3.

( 195 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

I found myself foiled in every hope, until I renounced—
Nor then was left free to live the life ascetic alone.
To God the glory! My wormwood sourly cleaves to me still,
And I am not speaking truth if honey I shall it call.
And none, I fancy, shall win in Paradise to abide,
Excepting folk who in godly fear fought hard with themselves.
The day goes by, busy cares unceasing keep me from rest;
And when the dark covers all, I cannot watch thro' the night.
'Tis bed for me: on my side reclined I lay me to sleep,
Though true religion is where sides meet not beds any more[1].

Certain precepts in the following poem—*e.g.* the injunction against holding office under the Government—are characteristic of the strict pietism which developed in the Umayyad epoch and prevailed amongst the early Ṣúfís. It will be observed, however, that while the reader is exhorted to worship God and seek refuge with Him, nothing is said to indicate that what he has sown here he may hope to reap hereafter. The translation retains the monorhyme, but not the metre, of the original.

( 196 )

Kneel in the day-time to thy Lord and bow,
And when thou canst bear vigil, vigil bear.
Is fine wheat dear, 'tis nobleness in thee
To give thy generous horse an equal share;
And set before thyself a relish of
Bright oil and raisins, scanty but sweet fare[2].
A clay jug for thy drink assign: thou'lt wish
Nor silver cup nor golden vessel there[3].
In summer what will hide thy nakedness
Content thee; coarse homespun thy winter wear.
I ban the judge's office, or that thou
Be seen to preach in mosque or lead the prayer;

[1] I. 272, 6.

[2] The merits of olive oil are set forth (*Luzúm*, II. 264, 13–14): no blood is shed and no soul is hurt when it flows; it costs little to provide; darkness is removed by the light which it gives.

[3] Cf. I. 204, 5; 219, 4.

And shun viceroyalty and to bear a whip,
As 'twere the sword a paladin doth bare.
Those things in nearest kin and truest friends
I loathe, spend as thou wilt thy soul or spare.
Shame have I found in some men's patronage:
Commit thyself to His eternal care;
And let thy wife be decked with fear of Him
Outshining pearls and emeralds ordered fair—
All praiseth Him: list how the raven's croak
And cricket's chirp His holiness declare—
And lodge thine honour where most glory is:
Not in the vale dwells he that seeks the highland air[1].

More important, as throwing light on the character of his asceticism, is a poem that has been partially translated by Von Kremer[2] and published by I. Krachkovsky with two Russian translations, one in prose and the other in verse, from the hand of Baron V. Rosen[3]. The challenge conveyed in the opening verse was taken up by Hibatu'llah Ibn Abí 'Imrán, the chief missionary (*dá'i 'l-du'át*) of the Ismá'ílís in Cairo, who begged for information as to the grounds on which the poet adopted vegetarianism. The letters that passed between them have been published and translated by Professor Margoliouth in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*[4].

( 197 )

Thou art diseased in understanding and religion. Come to me, that thou mayst hear the tidings of sound truth.
Do not unjustly eat what the water has given up[5], and do not desire as food the flesh of slaughtered animals,
Or the white (milk) of mothers who intended its pure draught for their young, not for noble ladies[6].
And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking their eggs; for injustice is the worst of crimes.

[1] I. 293, 4.
[2] *Sitzungsberichte der Kais. Akad. der Wissenschaften* (*Phil.-Hist. Classe*), Vienna, 1879, vol. 93, p. 621 fol.
[3] *Zapiski*, vol. 22, pp. 291–301 (Petrograd, 1915).
[4] See p. 43, note 1.
[5] *I.e.* fish.
[6] Cf. *Luzúm*, I. 145, penult.

And spare the honey which the bees get betimes by their industry
from the flowers of fragrant plants;
For they did not store it that it might belong to others, nor did
they gather it for bounty and gifts[1].
I washed my hands of all this; and would that I had perceived
my way ere my temples grew hoar!
O people of my time, do ye know secrets which I knew but
divulged not?
Ye journeyed in the darkness of falsehood. Why were ye not
guided by the promptings of your enlightened (intellectual)
faculties?
The voice of error called you—and wherefore did ye recklessly
respond to every voice?
When the realities of your religion are exposed, ye stand revealed
as doers of deeds of disgrace and shame.
If ye take the right course, ye will not dye the sword in blood or
oblige the surgeon's probe to try the depth of wounds.
I admire the practice of ascetics, except that they eat the labour
of souls that covet wealth.
Purer in their lives, as regards food, are they that toil from morn
to night for lawful earnings.
The Messiah (Jesus) did not seclude himself in devotion to God,
but walked on the earth as a wanderer.
I shall be interred by one that loathes the task, unless I shall be
devoured by one whose stench is loathly[2].
And who can save himself from being the neighbour of bones like
the bones of the corpses that lie there unburied?[3]
One of the worst human dispositions and acts is the wailing of
those who bring news of death and the beating of the breast
by mourning women.
I forgive the sins of friend and foe, because I dwell in the house of
Truth amidst the tombstones[4].

[1] Cf. I. 363, 2; II. 169, 9, etc.

[2] The hyena.

[3] Cf. his remark in one of his letters to Ibn Abí 'Imrán: "Ofttimes, too, have I seen a couple of armies, each of them professing a distinct cult, meeting in battle and thousands falling on either side."

[4] Cf. I. 177, 7:

Whene'er I speak, my years present to me
The apparition of a stern admonisher
Saying, "Whoso shall let his tongue offend me,
Behoveth him to be abased and silenced."

And I reject praise, even when it is sincere: how, then, should I
accept false praises?
The soul, obstinate in evil, ceased not to be a beast of burden until
it became feeble and jaded.
It profits not a man that clouds pour rain over him whilst he lies
beneath a flag of stone[1];
And if there were any hope in nearness to water, some people
would have been eager to provide themselves with graves in
the marshland[2].

Here, as in many passages of the *Luzúm*, Ma'arrí preaches abstinence from meat, fish, milk, eggs, and honey on the plain ground that to partake of such food is an act of injustice to the animals concerned, since it inflicts unnecessary pain upon them[3]. In his reply to Ibn Abí 'Imrán he adds that on reaching the age of thirty[4] he restricted himself to a vegetarian diet for the benefit of his health; besides, he could not afford to buy meat. The latter motives are clearly subordinate to the first, and are not inconsistent with it. Professor Margoliouth thinks that Ma'arrí cuts a poor figure in this correspondence. No doubt Ibn Abí 'Imrán found his letters unsatisfying. Whether he was deceived by what I have called the poet's oracular style or whether, being an Ismá'ílí, he supposed that every religious precept must have an esoteric doctrine behind it, he had hoped that "the tidings of sound truth" would yield something piquant: in fact, he wished to draw from Ma'arrí a confession as to the nature of his theological beliefs. "Why," he asks, "should you abstain from animal food? If God empowers one animal to eat an-

[1] Amongst the Arabs of the desert, water is the symbol of life; hence in their elegies we often meet with such expressions as "may the clouds of dawn keep green thy grave with unfailing showers!" (Sir C. Lyall, *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, p. 55). This is one of the things which indicate that the pagan Arabs were conscious of an existence after death. Cf. G. Jacob, *Altarabisches Beduinenleben*, p. 142 foll.

[2] *Luzúm*, I. 232, 8.

[3] Cf. *Luzúm*, I. 261, 11; II. 210, 13; 258, 12; 284, 13; 373, 9; 383, 14–15, etc.

[4] This statement, taken in conjunction with the seventh verse of the preceding poem, makes it likely that Ma'arrí's vegetarianism developed its *ascetic* character after his return from Baghdád.

other, though He knows best what is wise and is most merciful to His creatures, you need not be more just and merciful to them than their Lord and Creator." This line of argument was hardly one that a reputed heretic would care to pursue, while an earnest moralist might be excused for ignoring it. Must we solve the problem of evil before we can justify abstention from what reason and conscience forbid? Ma'arrí thought not. Having no solution, or none that he was willing to communicate, he took his stand with the Buddhists and Jainas on a principle which inspires all his ethics and constitutes his practical religion—the principle of non-injury. That was the "truth" which he promised to his readers, and they could not fairly reproach him if he declined to state how it was to be reconciled with divine providence, whatever his views on that subject may have been.

On the same ground he prohibits the use of animal skins for clothing, recommends wooden shoes[1], and blames fine ladies who wear furs[2]. Probably he derived these doctrines from Indian asceticism, which he had opportunities of studying in Baghdád. Von Kremer identified them with Jainism, remarking that the prohibition of honey is peculiar to the Jainas[3]; which proves nothing, since any one who desired to live in accordance with the above-mentioned principle might naturally make this rule for himself. The Jainas, again, are forbidden to dye their clothes[4], and Ma'arrí tells us that his dress was "of cotton, neither green nor yellow nor dark-grey[5]." When we come to his ethical discipline, we shall find that in the main it tallies with the ethics of Jainism as described in the following sentences:

> The first stage of a Jaina layman's life is that of intelligent and well-reasoned faith in Jainism; and the second is when he takes a vow not to destroy any kind of life, not to lie, not to use another's property without his consent, to be chaste, to limit his necessaries,

[1] II. 51, last line and fol. [2] II. 415, last line.
[3] *Die philosoph. Gedichte des Abu 'l-'Alá*, p. 83.
[4] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 22, p. 163.
[5] *Luzúm*, II. 337, 15.

to worship daily, and to give charity in the way of knowledge, medicine, comfort, and food. And these virtues are summed up in one word: *ahiṃsā* (not-hurting). "Hurt no one" is not merely a negative precept. It embraces active service also; for, if you can help another and do not—your neighbour and brother—surely you hurt him[1].

Little is said in the *Luzúm* about Indian ascetics. Ma'arrí refers to their habit of letting their nails grow long, and observes that he, like Moslems in general, considers it a mark of asceticism to pare the nails[2]. He speaks with admiration of their religious suicide[3]. The Indian practice of cremation meets with his approval: fire saves the corpse from disinterment (and hyenas) and is a more effective deodoriser than camphor[4]. In another poem he says ironically that the cremated Indian is happy in being exempt from the torture which buried Mohammedans undergo.

( 198 )

Think about things! Thought clears away some part of ignorance.
Were skilled
The nesting bird to see the end, it ne'er would have begun to build.
The Indians, who cremate their dead and never visit them again,
Win peace from straitness of the grave and ordeal by the angels twain[5].
To male and female in the world the path of right is preached in vain[6].

He praises cremation without urging his readers to practise it. Let the dead be laid in mother earth, uncoffined: coffins are second graves[7]. How foreign to the spirit of Islam his asceticism is, and how fully it harmonises with Indian and Manichaean ideas, I can best show by quoting some passages of a different kind.

[1] *Outlines of Jainism*, by J. Jaini, Introd., p. 23. Naturally, the rules for Jaina ascetics include celibacy and are in general more severe than those for the laity.

[2] *Luzúm*, I. 367, 8; 371, 16. [3] See No. 70. [4] *Luzúm*, I. 235, 5–7.

[5] According to orthodox belief, when the dead man is laid in the grave he is examined by two angels, named Munkar and Nakír; hence Mohammedans take care to have their graves made hollow, that they may sit up with more ease during the inquisition. Cf. *Luzúm*, II. 231, last line.

[6] *Luzúm*, I. 418, 18. [7] I. 184, 10–11.

( 199 )

Whenever I reflect, my reflecting upon what I suffer only rouses me to blame him that begot me.
And I gave peace to my children, for they are in the bliss of non-existence which surpasses all the pleasures of this world.
Had they come to life, they would have endured a misery casting them to destruction in trackless wildernesses[1].

( 200 )

Allah disposes. Be a hermit, then,
And mix not with the divers sorts of men.
I know but this, that him I hold in error
Who helps to propagate Time's woe and terror[2].

( 201 )

Humanity, in whom the best
Of this world's features are expressed—
The chiefs set over them to reign
Are but as moons that wax and wane.

If ye unto your sons would prove
By act how dearly them ye love,
Then every voice of wisdom joins
To bid you leave them in your loins[3].

The rich man desires a son to inherit his wealth, but were the fathers intelligent no children would be born[4]. Procreation is a sin, though it is not called one[5]: a father wronged by his sons pays the just penalty for the crime which he committed against them[6]. To beget is to increase the sum of evil[7], and the lizard's ancestors are the cause of its being hunted[8]. It is better for a people, instead of multiplying, to perish off the face of the earth[9]. The first condition of happiness is that no woman should have been created[10].

[1] II. 236, 4.
[2] II. 69, 5.
[3] I. 397, penult.
[4] II. 170, 1. In *Luzúm*, II. 239, 7, procreation is said to be the best of human actions and prompted by reason; but instead of النسل (procreation) we must evidently read النسك (asceticism).
[5] II. 299, 4.
[6] II. 421, 8.
[7] II. 13, 9.
[8] II. 51, 10–11.
[9] I. 206, 2.
[10] I. 84, penult.

( 202 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)
The son is wretched; by him his parents wretched are made,
And blest is that man whose mind was ne'er distraught by a son.
A lad who clings to his sire puts cowardice in the brave;
The generous miserly show or yield not even a spark[1].

( 203 )

Amends are richly due from sire to son:
What if thy children rule o'er cities great?
Their nobleness estranges them the more
From thee and causes them to wax in hate[2],
Beholding one that cast them into Life's
Dark labyrinth whence no wit can extricate[3].

"Refrain from procreation, for its consequence is death[4]." Ma'arrí followed his own advice. He was the last of his line and takes credit for having escaped the universal plague: that is what he means when he says—

( 204 )

The cord of generation stretched unbroken between Adam and me, but no *b* was attached to my *l*[5].
When Khálid yawned, 'Amr yawned because of infection, but I was not infected by their yawning[6].

Before he died, he is said to have expressed a wish that his epitaph should be the verse:

My sire brought this on me, but I on none[7].

What a contrast with the Greek poet's calm declaration! —*μὴ φῦναι μὲν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον*. Here we face pessimism as a practical creed remorselessly pointing to the extinction

[1] I. 253, 2. Cf. II. 354, 9–10.
[2] Because, the more noble a man is, the more keenly does he feel the pain of existence. Cf. II. 151, penult. and fol.
[3] I. 45, 3.
[4] I. 373, 10.
[5] *I.e.* the final *l* of *waṣl* (connexion) was not followed in my case by the preposition *bi* (with), which would have linked me to my successor if the series had continued.
[6] I. 44, 6.
[7] See Dhahabí's biography in the *Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, p. ١٣٣.

of mankind. If Ma'arrí believed in a future existence, it would seem that he held the same opinion as Hafiz of its value in relation to the present:

A Paradise of pleasure
Bought with a world of pain—
Fie on the luckless treasure
That I must bleed to gain!

Recognising that his panacea is too heroic to be popular, he sometimes offers it in a diluted form. "If you must wed," says he, "take care to have no children[1]"; and he censures the foolish Jew who divorced his wife because she was barren[2]. He is more humane than logical in counselling men to seek husbands for their daughters but deter their sons from matrimony[3].

## IV.

### Philosophy and Religion.

Ma'arrí stands for the largest humanistic culture of his time. While he may properly be called a philosopher in so far as he sought after a reasoned view of life and the world, he was only an amateur of scientific philosophy. He reflects on its problems, takes up this or that theory in turns, and concludes that nothing is certain except death. His speculations are capricious and incoherent. "He is almost entirely wanting in the gift of combination. He can analyse, but he does not hit upon any synthesis, and his learning bears no fruit[4]." There is, however, something to be said on the other side. Philosophy is defined by Jáḥiẓ as "Knowledge of the essences of things and the doing of that which is best[5]." Ma'arrí is not primarily concerned with abstract truth. He seeks the True for the sake of the Good, and seldom loses sight of the practical end. We should also recollect that neither the form of his verse nor the circumstances in which it was composed allow us to see his philo-

[1] II. 253, 14. [2] II. 265, 4–5. [3] I. 216, 10.
[4] De Boer, *Hist. of Philosophy in Islam*, tr. by E. R. Jones, p. 66.
[5] *Mafátiḥu 'l-'ulúm*, ed. Van Vloten, p. 131.

sophical and theological ideas in orderly relation to each other. He presents them as jumbled fragments of truth—and to this fact he may have partly owed his immunity from persecution—but it is at least arguable that for him they were a more or less consistent whole. Recently an attempt has been made by a Mohammedan savant to harmonise them[1], and we may assume that Ma'arrí himself endeavoured to do the same. If so, the reticence which he practised in his correspondence with Ibn Abí 'Imrán and extols in many of his poems[2] is all the more tantalising; but while he disbelieved or doubted what is accepted as a matter of course by Moslems, his own beliefs seem to be deeply involved in contradiction and cannot, I think, have given him any firm ground for a solution of the problems with which he wrestled.

Upon those who pretend that his learning is barren one might retort that if he achieved no system of ethics, his moral creed was in some respects worthy of Socrates or Kant. But the result, let us admit, counts for little in comparison with the method. What gives Ma'arrí importance in the history of Moslem thought is his critical attitude, his assertion of the rights of reason against the claims of custom, tradition and authority, and his appeal from the code of religion to the unwritten law of justice and conscience: in a word, his rationalism. He is a free-thinker at heart. Without openly denying Revelation or defying the authority of the Koran, he uses his own judgment in matters which Mohammedan orthodoxy regards as indisputable. For him, reason is "the most precious of gifts[3]"; it is the source of right

[1] Dr Ṭá-há Ḥusayn in *Dhikrá Abi 'l-'Alá*, p. 327 foll.

[2] *E.g.* I. 271, last line:

(Metre: *Basiṭ*.)

A bosom-thought having once set forth and quitted its house,
It finds not shelter again in any house evermore.
Guard close thy mind from the friend, the true dear friend at thy side;
How oft deceivers have laid a secret bare to the light!
And deep-hid feelings of hate have signs whereby they appear
Distinct as when on the lion's jaws thou seest a foam.

He declares (II. 352, 13 fol.) that he has guarded the daughters of his mind and has not displayed them to any human being or given them in marriage, though they have remained with him for a long time.

[3] I. 151, 1.

knowledge and right action. Infallible it is not—many questions it must leave in suspense; yet wise men trust and obey it, convinced that nowhere will they meet with a surer guide "to point the morning and the evening ways[1]." In the moral domain he reaches a positive goal: virtue is not in doubt, whatever else may be[2].

When he applies this principle to metaphysical investigation, it does not take him very far, though his thoughts are sometimes suggestive. He appears to have had but a slight acquaintance with Greek and Moslem philosophy, but he could boast of an acute mind well stored with "curious information about every age[3]." I may notice here a coincidence which illustrates his erudition. Mr Baerlein happens to remark that "he (Ma'arrí) would have been as much bewildered as Herodotus if he had known that Lycians took their mother's, not their father's, name[4]." Now, the poet knew the fact of which Mr Baerlein imagines him to have been ignorant, and these verses prove that he was not at all bewildered by it:

( 205 )

We are in error and delusion. If thou hast a certainty, produce it!

Love of truth caused the people of Rúm (Asia Minor) to prefer that a man should trace his descent to his maternal ancestry in the female line.

Who his father was they knew not save by supposition—and the young antelope follows its dam[5].

It would be a long business to collect all the passages in which Reason is honoured and commended. I will translate a few of them.

[1] No. 109. [2] I. 266, last line. [3] II. 96, penult.
[4] *Abu 'l-Ala the Syrian*, p. 23. Herodotus, I. 173.
[5] *Luzúm*, I. 196, 9. The explanation offered by Ma'arrí is correct as far as it goes. Cf. M. A. Potter, *Sohrab and Rustam*, p. 187: "Too much has undoubtedly been made of the opinion that matriarchy was founded on uncertainty of paternity. On the other hand, it would be impossible to deny that often where matriarchy prevails, or has prevailed, the tie which unites husband and wife is extremely weak, and that a child would have to possess more than ordinary powers of intuition to recognise his true father."

( 206 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)
Whene'er thou thinkest a thought unmixed with any decay
Of sound intelligence, easy comes the thing that was hard.
The reason, if it be sane, doth ever weaken the soul[1]
Until she die: to her work it gives the name but of play.
Fair ladies, thronging betimes their wonted pleasure to take,
Seem phantoms glittering by, the puppet-shows of an hour.
Too great a body makes grief for him who bears it away
To earth; and ere 'tis interred, augments the gravedigger's toil[2].

( 207 )

Reason forbade me many things whereto
Instinctively my nature's bias drew;
And 'tis perpetual loss if, knowing, I
Believe a falsehood or give Truth the lie[3].

( 208 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)
Oh, cleave ye to Reason's path that rightly ye may be led:
Let none set his hopes except upon the Preserver!
And quench not the Almighty's beams, for lo, He hath given to all
A lamp of intelligence for use and enjoying.
I see humankind are lost in ignorance: even those
Of ripe age at random guess, like boys playing *mora*[4].

( 209 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)
Traditions come from the past, of high import if they be
True; ay, but weak is the chain of those who warrant their truth.
Consult thy reason and let perdition take others all:
Of all the conference Reason best will counsel and guide[5].

The poet complains that men are too stupid to think for themselves.

[1] *I.e.* the appetitive soul (*nafs*).

[2] I. 104, 5.

[3] I. 121, 14.

[4] I. 214, penult. Arab boys played a game called *kharáj*, like the Italian *mora*, in which one player has to guess the number of fingers suddenly put forth by another. Cf. *micare digitis*.

[5] I. 288, 8.

(210)

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

I cared not to climb the hill of glory, because I know
'Tis always the lowland vales that gather the water.
Our full-grown, they seem to lisp like infants a few months old,
As though on their dromedaries the saddles were cradles.
Whatever you speak, they understand not; and being called,
They answer confusèdly 'twixt sleeping and waking.
No doubt but they rank as men, albeit the life they lead,
Given over to drowsiness, proclaims them for lynxes[1].

(211)

Certainty is not to be found in a time whose sagacity brought us no result but supposition.

We said to the lion, "Art thou a lion?" and he replied doubtfully, "Perhaps I am" or "I seem to be."[2]

The service which Ma'arrí performed by his criticism of conventional beliefs would have been more effectual if he had shown himself able to think constructively. He is not a sceptic in the strict sense of the term, he concedes that truth can be attained by means of reflection[3], but as a rule his reasoning leads him to a negative conclusion.

(212)

When a blind man goes by, pity him and know for sure that ye all are blind, even if ye have sight.

* * * * * *

I live in the present: the past I have forgotten, and I feel no savour of what shall come.

[1] I. 244, 12. We associate the lynx with keenness of sight, but the Arabs were struck by its somnolence. Hence the proverb, انوم من فهد, "More sleepy than a lynx." The literal translation of the last line runs: "although, in consequence of their drowsiness, they are only lynxes on camel-back."

[2] II. 375, 5.

[3] I. 229, last line; 373, 4; 427, 15. "The eye does not show things as they really are: make thought thy mirror" (I. 383, 15). In another place, however, he falls back upon the pure scepticism (*ἰσοσθένεια τῶν λόγων*) of Carneades: "The soul is subject to cognition and nescience, and every notion may be denied and affirmed" (I. 87, 6).

Some have held that nothing is real: did they affirm, then, as
a fact that there is no misery or happiness?
We are in dispute and contention with them—and the Lord of
mankind knows which of us are the greater liars[1].

( 213 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

Is any tale true that we should credit him that relates,
Or are not all of them worthless fables told in the night?
As for our reason, it questions not, but swears they are lies;
And reason's tree ever hath veracity for its fruit[2].

( 214 )

Experience nests in thickets of close shade,
Who gives his mind and life may hunt it down.
How many months and years have I outstayed!
And yet, methinks, I am but a fool and clown.
And Falsehood like a star all naked stands,
But Truth still hides her face 'neath hood and veil.
Is there no ship or shore my outstretched hands
May grasp, to save me from this sea of bale?[3]

( 215 )

Gall knoweth not what first embittered it,
Nor honey read the riddle of its sweet.
I could not answer when ye asked me why;
Whoso pretends to knowledge, 'tis a lie[4].

( 216 )

Bewildered, searching how things stand with me,
I ask to-day, "To-morrow what shall be?"
There is no certainty: my mind but tries
Its utmost in conjecture and surmise[5].

History shows that many freethinkers, not daring to express their thoughts freely, have sheltered themselves behind a religion in which they disbelieved. Such was

[1] II. 280, 15.
[2] I. 320, 2.
[3] I. 357, last line.
[4] I. 103, 6.
[5] II. 23, 13.

Euripides, and such was Ma'arrí[1]. In the works of both we find three elements:

(*a*) orthodox religious beliefs;

(*b*) rational doubts as to the truth of these beliefs;

(*c*) philosophical views inconsistent with these beliefs.

In Ma'arrí's case the contrast is sharper, because he does not write as a dramatist but as a moralist directly exhibiting or disguising his own character throughout. Like Euripides, he wrote for the minority who saw at once that if the pious asseverations were sincere, the parallel questionings were absurd, and who judged that the poet was more likely to want faith than wit. He, on his side, expected them to take hints in lieu of plain speech[2]; and no one can study the *Luzúm* without recognising that it is a masterpiece of innuendo. Apart from subtle ironies—of which the words italicised in the following passage may serve as a specimen:

(217)

'Tis said, "We all are weak and helpless creatures,
Unable or to hasten or retard.
A Power o'errules us: if we sin, no blame
To the evil-doer, no praise if we excel":
*Doctrine for which I in my time have found*
*Some proofs, tho' piety forbade me hold it.*

* * * * *

Men race along the beaten track to reach
What inexperience imagines new.
These maiden thoughts are wed to minds that come
In every age to cull them and deflower[3]——

[1] The words used by Dr Farnell in characterising Euripides (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. VI. p. 414 fol.) fit Ma'arrí exactly: "Being by nature a great poet, he had also something of the weakness of the 'polymath' or the 'intellectual'; he had not the steadiness of brain or strong conviction enough to evolve a systematic philosophy or clear religious faith; his was, in fact, the stimulating, eager, critical spirit, not the constructive. His mental sympathies and interests shift and range from pole to pole."

[2] See No. 234.

[3] II. 79, 9.

the whole spirit of the book is anti-clerical and anti-orthodox, pleading for inquiry, suggesting incredulity, and shaking the foundations of revealed religious truth. Of course, Ma'arrí knew perfectly well what he was about. He must have known what inference as to moral responsibility and the reality of a future state would be drawn by some persons from these lines, for instance:

(218)

Shall I go forth from underneath this sky? How shall I escape?
Whither shall I flee?
How many a year have I lived in Time! How many a Rajab
and Ṣafar have I passed![1]
Claws were given to the lion of the jungle that he might seek
victory (over his prey)[2].
God curse people who call me an infidel when I tell them the
truth![3]

As regards the essential articles of Islam, his position is easily determined. When a dogma which it would have been suicidal to reject outright is professed on one page and doubted on the next, his *credo* is a refusal of martyrdom, and we take it for what it is worth. "Be veracious," he says, "until thou deemest veracity a danger to thy life; then lie through thick and thin[4]"; and again, "Do not acquaint rascals with the essence of thy religion, else thou wilt expose thyself to ruin[5]." Similarly, where the question is not one of faith or infidelity, but of orthodoxy or heterodoxy, and we find him wavering between two doctrines, it will appear probable that in his heart he agrees with the heretics. The positive beliefs or opinions to which he unconditionally

[1] Rajab and Ṣafar are the seventh and second months of the Mohammedan year.

[2] In *Luzúm*, II. 309, 11–12, the poet asks how the lion is to blame for having been created bloodthirsty.

[3] *Luzúm*, I. 426, last line.

[4] II. 303, 8:

اصدق الى ان تظنّ الصدق مهلكة * وعند ذلك فاقعد كاذبًا وقمِ

[5] I. 326, 15:

لا تخبرنّ بكنه دينك معشرًا * شُطُرًا وإن تفعل فأنت مغرِّرُ

commits himself are few. He loves interrogations and hypotheses. It is characteristic of him to turn a problem over in his mind, look at it from different aspects, and incline now to one solution, now to another. His curiosity exhausts itself in climbing hills of thought[1], only to discover that their summits are capped with mist.

Before examining his treatment of religion, including Islam, let us see the principles from which he starts.

He favours the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter. Against one verse in which it is expressly denied,

I do not believe in the everlastingness of the stars or hold the eternity of the world[2],

there are many suggesting belief in it. That he should use guarded language will not surprise any one who knows what horror this theory inspires in Moslems of every sect.

( 219 )

If what the Sage[3] said is true, then Time has never been void of me and never will be.
By turns I am separated and united: the lote and the palm resemble me in the changes that befall them[4].

( 220 )

'Tis possible that the sun will be extinguished, which burned from the epoch of 'Ád[5] and whose fire the Lord made to blaze;
And if its red glow shall be quenched for evermore, then inevitably must Heaven be ruined[6].

[1] I. 102, 7:

لعمرك ما غادرتُ مطلع هضبة * من الفكر إلّا وارتقيتُ هضابها

[2] II. 320, 13:

وليس اعتقادى خلود النجوم * ولا مذهبى قِدَمُ العالم

[3] Aristotle. Cf. II. 145, 2:

لو صحّ ما قال رسطاليس من قِدَم * وهبّ من مات لم يجمعهم الفلك

"If Aristotle's doctrine of eternity were true and the dead awoke, Heaven would not contain them."

[4] II. 169, 13.

[5] *I.e.* from of old. Cf. p. 62, note 2.

[6] Cf. I. 372, 12: "They have asserted that decay will overtake the heavens; if that be true, then impurity is even as purity."

Mankind passed, and were it not that their Judge is all-knowing,
I should ask with Zuhayr[1], "*What way did they take?*[2]"
In the kingdom (world) whence they went not forth and from which they removed not, how shall I believe that they perished?[3]

(221)

(Metre: *Kámil.*)

I swear, my body will cease not ever to be in pain,
Until it come to its element eterne again[4];
And thither when I go back, my bones that once were strong
To earth will crumble during endless ages long[5].

(222)

Use my dust for your ablutions: perchance your doing so will bring to me after extinction the objects of my desire[6].
And if by God's decree I shall be made into a clay pot that serves for purification, I am thankful and content[7].
(Bodies are) substances put together and disjoined by a marvellous Power, so that they became like accidents[8].

That is to say, bodies consist of eternal and indestructible substances (elements) which, in so far as they are subject to combination and decomposition, thereby assume the form of accidents. According to the orthodox (Ash'arite) view, both substance and accident are created by the will of God and have only a momentary duration[9].

On the other hand, Ma'arrí asks whether the stars are acquainted with the Unseen and adds that in his opinion they are not eternal[10], though elsewhere he describes them as eternal and everlasting[11].

[1] One of the chief poets of Arabian heathendom.

[2] Ahlwardt, *The Divans*, p. 86, l. 1.

[3] *Luzúm*, II. 145, 9.

[4] The body at death is resolved into the "eternal element," *i.e.* Matter. Cf. No. 87, last line, where the elements are called "the eternal Four" (الاربع القُدُم).

[5] *Luzúm*, I. 398, 7.

[6] Cf. I. 419, 13–14. When water is unobtainable, the ritual ablutions may be performed with fine sand or earth.

[7] Cf. No. 127, l. 5 foll.

[8] II. 61, 5.

[9] See D. B. Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, p. 201 foll.

[10] *Luzúm*, I. 166, last line and fol. Cf. I. 247, 4; Nos. 10, 40, 220, etc.

[11] See Nos. 225, 230, 287. In all these passages, however, it might be maintained that something less than eternity is implied. Cf. p. 157, note 2.

( 223 )

How many a pearl Time strings and strews at last!
His Pleiad necklace holds for ever fast,
But dark he leaves the fame and splendour of the Past[1].

It appears to me difficult to explain these and similar contradictions, which occur regularly when his orthodoxy is at stake, except by supposing that he *means* to contradict himself, and that his real or predominant view is the one which a writer accused of infidelity would be anxious to disown. He makes a practice of affirming or denying more or less explicitly what in other passages he affirms or denies with precaution in the contrary sense: the former class of statements is to be suspected[2].

I lift my voice whene'er I talk in vain,
But do I speak the truth, hushed are my lips again[3].

Religious dissimulation (*taqiyyat*) is well understood by Moslems; almost every *zindíq* (freethinker) employed it in self-defence, and it was cultivated as a fine art. Appreciation of our poet's skill in taking cover beneath this species of irony is the key to much that has puzzled European readers of the *Luzúm*. As to the influence of the stars, he shares the belief which prevailed amongst his contemporaries; but here too we find him vacillating. Have the planets a soul and intelligence, in virtue of which they operate on matter, or are they celestial bodies deriving their power from the motions of the spheres? Apparently Ma'arrí embraced the second opinion, though he rather suggests than expresses it.

"A body of four (elements) overseen by seven (planets) which abide in twelve (zodiacal signs)[4]."

"Did those (Moslems) who wrought good works win Paradise, while Nawbakht was lodged in Hell-fire?

[1] I. 382, 10.

[2] He declares frankly that the *Luzúm* is a mixture of truth and falsehood:

وليس على الحقائق كلّ قولى * ولكن فيه اصناف المجاز

(I. 435, 14; cf. 437, 8.)

This is not inconsistent with his assertion that the book contains nothing but *moral* truth (p. 51 above).

[3] No. 263, last verse.

[4] I. 422, 6.

'Tis the crowning injustice that thou shouldst be held guilty of
what Mars and Venus brought upon thee[1]."

"The celestial world, as we are told, hath natural dispositions
which the power of the stars causes to descend (to the earth)[2]."

"Men will never be without evil in their time whilst Mars or
Saturn continues over them[3]."

Mars and Saturn, however, are "two slaves forced to serve (God)[4]: I care not though they overtop me[5]."

In some of his poems he plays fancifully with the theory that the planets and constellations belong to an upper world of intelligences and souls, which is the archetype of the terrestrial world.

"Dead are the stars of Night, or sentient beings?
Irrational, or does reason dwell in them?[6]"

"If it be true that the luminaries of heaven are percipient, why
do ye deny their loving one another and their relationship
by marriage?

Maybe Canopus, the stallion of the stars, wedded a daughter of
Arcturus on payment of a dowry[7]."



The world celestial, as the world below,
(Philosophers have held) can feel and know;
And some aver the planets are endowed
With minds intelligent and speak aloud.

[1] I. 174, 2. Nawbakht was a Zoroastrian astrologer. He and his sons after him enjoyed the favour of the Caliph Manṣúr (A.D. 754–775).

[2] II. 181, 10.

[3] II. 174, 9.

[4] Cf. Koran, 16, 12 and No. 24, l. 4 foll.

[5] *Luzúm*, II. 367, last line. The verse, "'Tis as though the seven planets were playing (the children's game) *buqqárá*" (I. 71, last line), appears to mean that their power is vain except in so far as it comes to them from Allah. So I. 122, last line. Cf. II. 195, 5, where Mars and Saturn are compared with governors liable to be deprived of their authority by the monarch who conferred it.

[6] II. 171, 3. Cf. II. 97, 6:

Some said, "The planets have perfect minds": were 't true,
We must suppose them touched by crazy eld.

[7] I. 372, 14.

Then are the stars about religion too
At odds like us—this Moslem and that Jew?
Perchance in Heaven a Mecca may be found
Like Mecca here, with Mecca's hills around.
We needs must think that Light was made: the prime
Eternal origin is darkful Time;
Virtue a track untrodden, deep in sand,
But Vice a highway through our human land[1].
From inborn nature ne'er canst thou be free
Thy life long, and one more is learned by thee[2].
If now the rulers wax unjust, there comes
A fiercer tyrant dealing wounds and dooms:
Even so to wrangling doves a hawk will cry,
"If ye are wicked, wickeder am I[3]."
Look, while the lion's claws attain full span,
How trimmed and cut short are the nails of man.
Such is the World's decree concerning all;
The wild ass hath large ears, the ostrich small.
Immortal wouldst thou be, then draw no breath:
This life is but a ladder unto death[4].

Ma'arrí might have said with Kant, "Two things there are which the oftener and the more steadfastly we consider them, fill the mind with an ever new and an ever increasing admiration and reverence—the starry heaven above and the moral law within." It is not unlikely that in his blindness he retained, as Milton seems to have done, a peculiarly vivid recollection of "all luminous effects, all contrasts of light and darkness." Be this as it may, some of his finest poems are those in which his imagination contemplates

the great dome of Heaven, whose poles
Have ever awed men's souls[5].

[1] Cf. II. 323, penult.: "It seems that evil is radical in them (mankind), and (as good is derivative) so light is originated amidst the (eternal) darkness."

[2] Habit is second nature. Cf. II. 256, 7–8.

[3] Cf. I. 434, last line: "the wickedness of the dove, though she is reckoned amongst the good birds, is like the wickedness of the hawk and the falcon."

[4] II. 270, 10.

[5] No. 10, *supra*.

( 225 )

Feel shame in presence of the daily sun,
The moon of night, and shining troops untold
Of stars which in the sky their courses hold
By Allah's leave, nor fails them breath to run.

These have a nearer claim and right, I trow,
To reverence than sons of noblest sire[1].
Glory to Him who made them! Shall their fire
Sink in the dust of Time? I say not so.

Nay, but I muse—Are they endowed with mind
Whereby they can distinguish foul from fair?
Are feminine and masculine up there
By birth related and in marriage joined?

* * * * *

I clean renounce the fool whose hidden track
And open prove him still to error sworn,
Who bans the prayer of afternoon with scorn
And casts the prayer of noon behind his back.

Give the poor man who comes to thee a dole,
Scant though it be, nor frown away thy guest,
But raise for him a flame of ruddy crest
That frolics in the darkness like a foal![2]

Time and Space are eternal and infinite: they encompass every sensible object and have no perceptible colour (quality) or magnitude[3].

[1] The original has "the sons of Fihr," *i.e.* the tribe of Quraysh, to which (as Ma'arrí, no doubt, meant his readers to remember) the Prophet and the Caliphs belonged.

[2] *Luzúm*, I. 415, 4. With the last verse cf. I. 318, 10: "And the fire shone from afar like a bright bay mare which is tethered and cannot reach her foal, so that she never keeps quiet."

[3] II. 252, 7:

مكانٌ ودهرٌ أحرزا كلَّ مُدْرَكٍ * وما لهما لونٌ يُحَسُّ ولا حَجْمُ

( 226 )

Two fates still hold us fast,
A future and a past;
Two vessels' vast embrace
Surrounds us—Time and Space[1].

Whene'er we ask what end
Our Maker did intend,
Some answering voice is heard
That utters no plain word[2].

( 227 )

Space hath no limit and doth ever last,
But Time is fleeting, never standing fast.
The fool said, "I have thrown to earth my foe";
Perish his hands! What gave him power to throw?
Man, like a fire that blazed awhile and ceased
In ashes, lives most blest presuming least.

* * * * *

Let Rabbis laud their Sabbath as they may,
The truly wise keep Sabbath every day[3].

His view of the nature of Time differs from that commonly accepted by Moslem philosophers. In the *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán* he writes as follows: "Abuse of Time increased to such an extent that it was prohibited in the Apostolic Tradition, 'Do not abuse Time, for God is Time.' What this means is well-known[4], and also that its inner sense is not that which appears on the surface, since none of the prophets ever held that Time is the Creator or the Object of worship; and we read in the Koran (45, 23), 'Nothing but Time destroys us[5].' The statement of certain people,

[1] Cf. Nos. 1 and 229. [2] *Luzúm*, II. 368, 4. [3] I. 169, 9.

[4] According to the explanation offered by most theologians, abuse of Time is forbidden on the ground that, inasmuch as God is really the author of all the evil for which Time is blamed, to abuse Time is, in effect, to abuse God (cf. *Lisán*, v. 378 fol.). Some mystics say that *al-Dahr* (Time without beginning or end) is a name of God (*Fuṣúṣu 'l-Ḥikam*, Cairo, A.H. 1321, p. 257, 14 foll.).

[5] These words are attributed to the Meccan idolaters who disbelieved in a future life.

that Time is the motion of the heavenly sphere, is a phrase devoid of reality....I have given a definition that well deserves to have been anticipated, though I never heard it before, namely, that Time is a thing whereof the least part is capable of enclosing all objects of perception. In this respect it is the contrary of Space, because the least part of the latter cannot enclose a thing in the same way as a vessel encloses its contents[1]."

We have already seen how he turns these ideas to account in the *Luzúm*, and I will now select a few passages where he develops them more clearly.

First, as to the eternity and infinity of Time:

"I see that Time is eternal and everlasting—glory to (God) the Preserver, the Perfect![2]"

"Time is old, and beside his life, if thou wouldst measure it, the lives of the Eagles are brief[3]."

"If Gabriel were to fly away from Time for the remainder of his life, he would not be able to go outside of Time[4]."

Time, being independent of the revolutions of the celestial spheres, does not affect the course of events, which (indirectly, at any rate) is determined by the ever-changing position of the planets relatively to one another. Time brings nothing to pass; it is, so to speak, the neutral, unconscious atmosphere of all action and suffering. Man sins, by freewill or by fate: Time cannot sin and therefore ought not to be reviled[5].

(228)

I hold that humankind are worse
Than Time's containing universe.
Was any creature found within it
Of real worth? Each hour and minute
Ever most falsely they decry;
Their hours and minutes tell no lie[6].

[1] *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán* (Cairo, 1907), p. 137, l. 15 foll.
[2] *Luzúm*, II. 227, last line.
[3] I. 330, 11. The "Eagles" are the stars named Aquila.
[4] I. 372, 11.
[5] I. 80, 3; 413, penult.
[6] II. 117, 12.

( 229 )

The pillars of our world are the natures of four (elements)
which were made substrates for Him who is over us;
And God fashioned for the earth and its people two vessels,
Space and passing Time.
Time knoweth not what comes to be within it: how, then, is it
reproached for what came to be?

* * * * *

We weep and laugh, and Fate is our appointed ruler: Time did
not make us laugh or weep.
We complain of Time, though he never sinned; and could he
speak, he would complain of us,
Who with one mind consent to the unjust deeds implanted in us
—and the most innocent of us is nigh unto the most wicked[1].

The following poem has a harmony of rhythm and power of expression equal to the high thoughts which inspired it.

( 230 )

When 'tis said that Time destroyed a thing, the meaning is
"the Lord of Time," for Time is but a servant.
Thou canst not set a bound to the birth-time of this Sun, and
reason declares that it is without beginning.
The whole universe underlies the least atom of existence, and
existing objects are not perceived by the short-haired hard-
hoofed mares (the Hours).
When they go by, they return not, and others like them suc-
ceed: Time is past and future.
None of them that vanished came back after vanishing, yet
nothing exists without Time, which is renewed continuously.
'Tis as though Thou (God) hadst placed souls in the images
(bodies) and wert repenting of negligence therein.
According to the view of reason, there is not one Adam, but
logically there are many Adams[2].

[1] II. 354, 14.

[2] Cf. II. 326, 17:

خالقٌ لا يُشَكُّ فيه قديمٌ * وزمانٌ على الانام تقادَمْ
جائزٌ ان يكون آدمُ هذا * قَبْلَهُ آدمٌ على إثْرِ آدَمْ

Men are diverse in their aims: forgetful and mindful, careless
and anxious, building and ruining[1].

The conclusion stated in the penultimate verse rests on the premiss that the world is eternal; whence it follows that the number of human souls is infinite.

In all this we can trace many resemblances to the Pythagorean natural philosophy, of which the physician Abú Bakr al-Rází (Rhazes) is the most illustrious exponent. Al-Rází died forty or fifty years before Ma'arrí was born. His metaphysic "starts from old doctrines, which his contemporaries ascribed to Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Mani and others. At the apex of his system stand five co-eternal principles—the Creator, the Universal Soul, the First or Primeval Matter, Absolute Space, and Absolute Time or Eternal Duration. In these the necessary conditions of the actually existing world are given. The individual sense-perceptions, generally, presuppose an existing Matter, just as the grouping of different perceived objects postulates Space. Perceptions of change further constrain us to assume the condition of Time. The existence of living beings leads us to recognise a Soul; and the fact that some of these living beings are endowed with Reason, *i.e.* have the faculty of bringing the Arts to the highest perfection, necessitates our belief in a wise Creator, whose Reason has ordered everything for the best[2]."

Ma'arrí, too, believes in a Creator[3], whom he identifies with Allah. He emphatically repudiates atheism. God is a reality (*ḥaqq*)[4], One, eternal, omnipotent, and wise (*ḥakím*): His wisdom is demonstrated by His works. While it is neces-

"An eternal Creator, as to whom there is no doubt, and Time eternal in
relation to mankind.
It is possible that anterior to this Adam there should be one Adam after
another" (*i.e.* an infinite series of human beings).

The words "in relation to mankind" serve to guard the poet from the imputation that he makes Time co-eternal with God. Elsewhere (II. 43, 12–14) he refers to the ancient tradition that Adam is the son of Time.

[1] II. 261, 4.

[2] De Boer, *Hist. of Philosophy in Islam*, tr. by E. R. Jones, p. 78 fol.

[3] *Luzúm*, II. 238, 7: "Philosophy demonstrates (the existence of) One who is wise, omnipotent, and uniquely perfect in His majesty."

[4] I. 433, 8; II. 399, 5.

sary to have an *intelligent* belief in the Supreme Being[1], speculation concerning His essence and attributes is futile, since the mind cannot comprehend them[2].

In the verse (II. 219, 14):

Dost not thou see that the planets move in their spheres by the power of a Lord who moveth not?

Ma'arrí probably means that God transcends all change, that He is eternal and infinite in His nature—not "motionless" (*ghayr muntaqil*) in the sense that, being *actus purus*, He never passes from potentiality to actuality[3].

(231)

God fashioned me—the *why* of it I know not;
To Him omnipotent and One the glory!
Let all mine hours and moments bear me witness
That I abjure the miscreants who deny Him[4].

(232)

God, He is God sans peer. Deceived
Are they that scoffed and disbelieved.
When thy soul mounts, in Him have faith
Even to thy last remaining breath;
So mayst thou hope forgiveness on a day
When, thy grave dug, the digger goes his way[5].

(233)

If thou art atheist from excess of folly,
Bear witness, O denier, I am none.
I dread the chastisement from God hereafter
And own the power supreme in hands of One[6].

[1] I. 351, 8.

[2] I. 256, 4; II. 69, 11; 252, 8; 334, 11; 349, 13.

[3] The latter explanation is given by Dr Ṭá-há Ḥusayn (*Dhikrá*, p. 363 foll.).

[4] I. 296, 2.

[5] I. 267, last line.

[6] I. 280, 4.

(234)

I marvel at a physician who denies the Creator after having
studied anatomy;
And the astronomer has been taught what affirms the truth of
Religion—
Stars of fire and stars akin to earth and water and wind[1].
The sagacious man of the company is he that understands a
hint, so that he deems it a plain statement[2].

It appears, then, that Ma'arrí was a monotheist. But was he a monotheist in the same sense as Mohammed was, or as the Moslem scholastic theologians were? For him, Time and Space are infinite: therefore the Creator cannot be outside of them.

(235)

Ye said, "A Wise One us created";
'Tis very true, and so say we.
"Sans Time and Space," ye postulated—
Then why not say at once that ye
Propound a mystery immense
Which signifies our want of sense?[3]

The problem of reconciling the Greek idea of "a Divinity which invests the whole of Nature[4]" with the Semitic "conception of God as will, as the sovereign over all[5]," is not touched by Ma'arrí. If reason convinced him that the world is eternal and has a Creator, a divine *intelligence* which eternally moves and maintains it[6], the facts of life as he saw

[1] According to Rází, "the heavenly bodies consist of the same elements as earthly things, and the latter are continually exposed to the influences of the former" (cf. *Luzúm*, II. 31, penult.).

[2] *Luzúm*, I. 231, 7.

[3] II. 179, 2.

[4] Aristotle, tr. by Dr Henry Jackson in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. I. p. 788.

[5] D. B. Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, p. 145.

[6] Cf. I. 331, 10:

اللُّبُّ قطبٌ والأُمورُ له رَحًى * فبهِ تُدَبَّرُ كلّها وتُدارُ

"Intelligence is an axis and things are its millstone, for by it they all are directed and moved."

them stood hopelessly against this theory[1] and threw him back upon the notion of an all-powerful and inscrutable *will* working throughout the universe of evil which it created for some mysterious end. Beyond this he seems to have been unable to go, and here his rationalism breaks down. He finds the world so radically unreasonable that in order to account for it he must call in a *deus ex machinâ*—the Allah of the Koran. The decree of Allah, *i.e.* Fate, makes things what they are.

While Ma'arrí acknowledges that Fate, like Time, is subject to Allah[2], his language occasionally suggests that he felt the pressure of an impersonal necessity emanating from the planets and controlling all human action; but since he writes with the freedom of a poet, we cannot safely give his words an interpretation which they do not demand. He holds God, or Fate, responsible for the evil nature implanted in mankind and for its consequences, and declares that God is just, without attempting to prove it.

"Our natures did not become evil by our choice, but in consequence of a (divine) command which the fates made a means (to its fulfilment)[3]."

"I see evidences of a compulsion (*jabr*) which I do not assert to be a fact: 'tis as though every one were dragged to (commit) evil[4]."

"O Lord of mankind, thou art exalted above every doubt: it seems as though we are obliged to commit sins[5]."

[1] Cf. II. 264, 4:

لولا بدائعُ دلّت انّ خالقنا * أدْرَى وأَحْكَمُ قلنا خَلْقُنا لَمَمُ

"But for marvellous works which indicate that our Creator is most knowing and wise, we should say that our creation is a blunder."

[2] I. 310, 15; II. 75, 15; 174, penult.

[3] I. 311, 6:

وما فسدت اخلاقنا باختيارنا * ولكن بأمر سبّبته المقادرُ

[4] I. 321, 3:

ارى شواهد جبر لا احقّقه * كأنّ كلًّا الى ما ساء مجرورُ

[5] II. 254, 3:

تعاليتَ ربَّ الناس عن كلّ ريبة * كأنّا بإتيان المآثم نُلزَمُ

"The ill of life is one bad element
Sought out with malice by the mixer's hand[1]."

"A nature immeshed in corruption: if man shall blame it, he blames its Creator[2]."

"For whose sake dost thou inflict punishment for the sin that occurred? The bell did not move until it was put in motion[3]."

( 236 )

Why blame the world? The world is free
Of sin: the blame is yours and mine.
Grapes, wine, and drinker—there are three,
But who was at fault, I wonder? He
That pressed the grapes, or that sipped the wine?[4]

( 237 )

If criminals are fated,
'Tis wrong to punish crime.
When God the ores created,
He knew that on a time

They should become the sources
Whence sword-blades dripping blood
Flash o'er the manes of horses
Iron-curbed, iron-shod[5].

While in these passages he approaches an absolute determinism, in others (which are exceptional, however) he keeps clear of it, and his moral rationalism assures him that God, who creates injustice, is Himself just.

[1] I. 201, penult.:

شرّ الحياة بسيطة مذمومة * عمدت لها بالسوء كفّ الغالثِ

[2] II. 206, penult.:

جبلّة بالفساد واشجة * ان لامها المرء لام جابلها

[3] II. 12, 10:

لمن تؤاخذ بالجرّى التى سلفت * وما تحرّكَ حتّى حُرّكَ الجَرَسُ

[4] II. 41, 2.

[5] II. 181, 4.

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

The Artificer of the stars, exalted is He above
The doctrine that He compels the ill-doer to his deed[1].

I perceived that men are naturally unjust to one another, but there is no doubt of the justice of Him who created injustice[2].

Here reason triumphs over experience, but for the most part it struggles in vain against the fatalistic pessimism which has been amply illustrated in these pages[3]. Ma'arrí cannot "justify the ways of God to man." Only once, I think, does he make the least advance in that direction:

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

By sin's ladder it may be that men to religion climb,
As digging makes fire spark up ere gushes the water[4].

He concludes by dismissing the whole question of predestination as a sterile theological controversy which interferes with the practice of virtue, and by telling his readers that the truth lies somewhere between the rival schools.

And touching my creed if men shall ask, 'tis but fear devout
Of Allah: nor freedom I uphold nor necessity[5].

Do not be either a Necessitarian or a Libertarian, but endeavour to take a position midway between them[6].

It would be rash to infer that he accepted the orthodox (Ash'arite) *via media*, the view that while God creates all human actions He also creates the power of men to appropriate them. This really explains nothing, as he must have

[1] I. 354, 8:

تعالى الذى صاغ النجوم بقدرة * عن القول اضحى فاعلُ السوء مُجْبَرا

[2] II. 280, 6:

رأيتُ سجايا الناس فيها تظالمٌ * ولا ريب فى عدل الذى خلق الظلما

Cf. II. 287, 3; 314, last line.

[3] "Reason is an ornament, but over it stands a Fate" (I. 322, 2).

[4] I. 308, 2:

لعلّ ذنوبًا كنّ للدين سلّمًا * ونارك دون المآء يقدحها الحفرُ

[5] No. 181, last verse.

[6] II. 358, 10:

لا تعش مجبرًا ولا قدريًّا * واجتهد فى توسّط بين بينا

been aware. He had the practical free-thinking moralist's contempt for scholasticism, whether liberal or the reverse. He treats the Mu'tazilites no better than their obscurantist opponents. The former might assert divine justice and interpret the Koran by the light of reason, but they were theologians, they did not make reason independent of Revelation or authorise it to decide all things, beginning with the credibility of Revelation itself. Therefore he says, thrusting both parties aside,

Ask pardon of God and never mind what Abu 'l-Hudhayl and Ibn Kalláb told their followers[1].

( 238 )

No books of polemic had been composed—
*Mughní* or '*Umdas*[2]—did not men with men
Strive panting after pelf. They have run neck-high
In disputation, reared on baselessness
A dazzling monument of mere fine words;
And still they cease not ever, north and south,
Drawing out syllogisms interminable.
Their vile trade let them ply: enough for thee
The omnipotent, the all-sustaining Lord![3]

Partly on rational grounds and partly, perhaps, by instinct Ma'arrí believed in the existence of a divine Creator. But, according to the second article of the Mohammedan creed, that Creator is revealed through prophecy: belief in Allah involves belief in the Koran, Mohammed, and Islam.

I have already remarked on the poet's ambiguous attitude towards the religion which he professed. In the *Luzúm* he speaks with two voices, one pious and conventional in tone,

[1] I. 131, 5. Cf. II. 172, 2 foll. Abu 'l-Hudhayl Muḥammad ibn 'Alláf (*ob. circa* A.D. 840) was a celebrated Mu'tazilite doctor: see D. B. Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, p. 136 foll. Ibn Kalláb, whom Shahrastání (pp. 20 and 65 in Cureton's edition) mentions by the name of 'Abdullah ibn Sa'íd al-Kallábí, was an orthodox scholastic theologian of the same period.

[2] Theological and other learned books entitled *Mughní* or '*Umda* are numerous. According to the commentator on the *Luzúm* (I. 249), *al-'Umad* is the title of a work by 'Abdu 'l-Jabbár (see Brockelmann, *Gesch. der Arab. Litteratur*, I. 411), the Mu'tazilite cadi of Rayy, who was contemporary with Ma'arrí and is referred to in terms of reprobation (*Luzúm*, II. 172, 4).

[3] I. 249, 5.

the other critical, ironic, irritating to men of firm faith, and anything but reassuring to the weaker brethren. His doubts are not concerned with minor points of doctrine; they are fundamental. We cannot dispose of them by setting his affirmations against them, as though it were simply a question of striking a balance. The anti-Islamic tendency is too deep and deliberate to be explained away. If the author was a Moslem, why should he have written so equivocally and yet significantly? If he was not a Moslem but wished to pass for one, it is easy to understand both the orthodox expressions and his peculiar method of insinuating disbelief. This hypothesis does not oblige us to maintain that during his forty years' seclusion he consistently held the same views and never doubted his own doubts. In some moods he may have reverted to the more positive state of mind which he finally abandoned for a bare deism[1]. "I confess," he says, "belief in One God and the avoidance of evil actions. For a long time I deceived myself and judged that one who is a liar spoke the truth about certain things[2]." Such fluctuations are, in any case, unimportant. On the whole, his Mohammedan sentiments (where they are not mere forms of speech) must be regarded as fictitious and insincere. Nevertheless, he could not do without them—in his books: their omission would have condemned him. While he used them to mystify and baffle the enemies of free-thought, he also knew how to make them serve the cause of its friends.

Further evidence comes from his prose writings. In a work entitled *al-Fuṣúl wa 'l-gháyát*[3], he imitated or parodied

[1] Cf. I. 231, penult.:

عجبًا لی اعصی من الجهل عقلی * ویظلّ السلیمُ عندی جریحا

"Strange! from ignorance I disobey my reason, and the sound course appears to me invalidated (worthy of rejection)."

[2] II. 329, 12:

اَدِینُ بربّ واحد وتجنّبٍ * فبیحَ المساعی حین یظلم دائنُ

لعمری لقد خادعتُ نفسی برهةً * وصدّقتُ فی اشیآءَ من هو مائنُ

[3] Until recently this book was supposed to be no longer extant; the first part of it has now been discovered (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1919, p. 449).

the Koran—an act of irreverence in which he followed the example set by several Moslem free-thinkers[1]; yet he violently censures one of these, Ibnu 'l-Ráwaṇdí, who had been guilty of the same impiety, and pays an eloquent tribute to the Koran, describing it as a book that "overcame and disabled and caused the Prophet's foes to shiver when confronted with it[2]." The *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán*, an epistle which Ma'arrí addressed to the scholar and poet Ibnu 'l-Qáriḥ ('Alí ibn Manṣúr al-Ḥalabí), contains, in addition to many anecdotes of the *zindíqs* and blasphemous quotations from their poetry, a burlesque description of Paradise, where in the manner of Lucian he depicts the pre-Islamic heathen bards revelling and quarrelling and taking part in a literary *causerie*. Although some persons upheld his orthodoxy, the mask was thin and might not have availed him, if the state of Syria during his lifetime had left the authorities at leisure to deal with offences of this kind. As it was, he ran no great risk. The Fáṭimids were indulgent, and the Mirdásids indifferent, to religious scepticism, which indeed found plenty of support both amongst the learned classes and men of the world.

Ma'arrí nowhere asserts that the dogma of Revelation is false. His way of handling this question has not hitherto been studied with sufficient care. If we wish to understand the *Luzúmiyyát*, we must realise that the author intended not only to disguise his opinions but also to make the disguise a means of indicating them. Dissimulation was, in all the circumstances, inevitable: under its safeguard might not the truth venture out—duly chaperoned and veiled? Such a delicate experiment in the art of "implying things" called for correspondingly fine apprehension on the part of the reader, and Ma'arrí knew his contemporaries well enough to feel sure that not many of them would master his secret. He gave them a chance of convincing themselves, none of convicting

[1] *The Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, Introd., p. 36; Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, Part II. p. 401 foll.

[2] *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán*, tr. in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1902, p. 355 fol.

him. At the worst, his faith would be impeached on the ground of inferences which are apparently disproved by orthodox confessions.

To begin with, he divides men into two classes, according as they are religious or intelligent: they cannot be both.

( 239 )

Although your mouths hymn Allah One and Peerless,
Your hearts and souls from that ye owe Him shrink.
I swear your Torah gives no light to lead us,
If there 'tis found that wine is lawful drink.

* * * * *

They all err—Moslems, Christians, Jews, and Magians;
Two make Humanity's universal sect:
One man intelligent without religion,
And one religious without intellect[1].

These verses are addressed or refer to the followers of Mohammed, Jesus, Moses, and Zoroaster, *i.e.* to all whose religion is derived from a scripture brought by a prophet[2].

The second couplet is highly characteristic. Taken out of the context, it might be read as a good Moslem's appeal to the authority of the Koran, which forbids wine-drinking, against the corrupt doctrine of the Pentateuch. That interpretation, however, pays no regard to logic. Ma'arrí's objection to wine-drinking, as we learn from many poems in the *Luzúm*, is non-religious.

( 240 )

Say to wine, which is contrary to Reason and ever causes the warrior's sword to be unsheathed,
"If thou wert interdicted by nothing but pain (after pleasure), thou wouldst have been allowable to the drinker;

[1] II. 201, 2. Elsewhere (*Luzúm*, II. 329, 4) he says that two things make men religious: either feebleness of mind or lofty aspiration.

[2] Moslems, of course, reckon Jesus amongst the prophets, though a semi-spiritual origin and nature distinguish him from the rest of the line. The Koran makes no mention of Zoroaster; but in one passage (22, 17) the Magians are ranked with the Jews and Christians, whom, because they possess inspired scriptures, Mohammed calls "the people of the Book."

But thou art banned by sovereign Reason, so get thee gone into
the dusty soil!"[1]

( 241 )

Men say wine destroys old griefs that bide in the breast;
And were it not destructive to the intellect, I should have been
a friend of wine and jollity[2].

Manifestly, therefore, his meaning is: "If the Torah sanctions wine-drinking, the Torah misguides us: we must obey Reason, not Revelation." The fact that in this instance he happens to agree with Mohammed leaves the general principle untouched. All religions are mixed with falsehood and, so far, stand on the same level. When he says

( 242 )

Follow Reason and do what it deems good, for it gathers the
honey of counsel,
And accept not a commandment from the Torah, for verily the
truth is hidden from it[3]—

his readers must be dull if they fail to see why in preaching rationalism to *Moslems* he attacks the supernaturalism of *Jews*. One guesses, too, that the following lines have a wider application than appears on the surface:

( 243 )

The Jews went astray: their Torah is an invention of the doctors
and rabbis,
Who pretended to have derived it from one (a prophet) like them-
selves; then traced it further back to the Almighty.
Whenever you discomfit a man who argues for his religion, he
hands over its keys (the task of defending it) to the traditions
(by which it is attested)[4].

[1] I. 144, 2.

[2] II. 312, 14. Cf. II. 361, 12: "If wine were lawful, I would not drink it, forasmuch as it makes my reasonableness (*ḥilm*) weigh light in the scale."

[3] I. 394, 8.

[4] I. 411, 10. Cf. I. 289, 1; II. 12, 12. "The *Ṣaḥîḥ* (a book purporting to contain those Traditions of the Prophet which can be regarded as authentic) is false beyond doubt" (I. 209, 1).

Another of his devices consists in putting forward an orthodox statement which is immediately discredited by the sequel.

( 244 )

The Christians built for their Messiah churches
Which almost rail at what the churchfolk do;
And if Mohammed and his Book I mention,
Then out with *his* Book comes the scoffing Jew.

*  *  *  *  *

Can any one deny Islam's religion,
Fashioned and brought to us by Fate divine?
Oh, where is Truth, that we may toil to seek it
With cruel pain o'er sands without a sign?[1]

Since good and evil alike are "fashioned and brought to us by Fate divine," the compliment to Islam seems a little unhappy; but letting that pass, we discover in the next verse that the religion "which nobody can deny" is not identical with Truth[2]. Some Mohammedan critics have attributed the poet's eccentric opinions to the necessities of the difficult rhyme[3]. To speak plainly, this is nonsense. Ma'arrí does not write at random: within a certain orbit his eccentricities are calculated and logical. His doubts, perplexities, and real inconsistencies only begin, as I have said, when his rationalism breaks down. Reason led him to conclusions which were not the less firm because they were chiefly of a negative kind; it showed him, for example, that Revelation is a false earthly light kindled and spread by men who had their own interests in view. Reason showed him

[1] I. 141, 11.

[2] Cf. a similar *reductio ad absurdum* of the dogma of Resurrection (II. 195, 2–3):

"It is said that there is no hope of a resurrection for the recompense of good works, but what thou hast heard concerning that matter is the pretence of a vain jester.
And how should the body be called to bliss after it has become rotten or been confined in the earth?"

Here the words "concerning that matter" are ambiguous, so that it is possible to regard the whole passage as a statement made by infidels and related by the poet.

[3] *Letters of Abu 'l-'Alá*, Introd., p. 38.

this—and left him, believing in God, to wrap himself in his virtue as best he could.

( 245 )

I shall pass away, not misdoubting the Creator, so weep not for
me nor let others weep.
Follow my ways, since they are good for you, and pray and give
alms as long as ye live.
Do not listen to tellers of lying stories which the feeble mind
deems true.
I see action as (vain as) inaction, and a world dragged to ruin by
a violent Fate,
And lines copied on a palimpsest and afterwards obliterated or
rubbed out[1].

We have examined a few specimens of the irony which Ma'arrí cultivated in order to publish his opinions with impunity, and which has been ignored by most students of the *Luzúmiyyát*, if it has not eluded them entirely. He had no need to employ it in his criticism of the Jewish and Christian sacred books; for, according to Mohammed, the Pentateuch and Gospel are corrupt in their present form, though originally they contained the same Word which Allah revealed in the Koran. The poet, therefore, attacks Judaism and Christianity without any disguise. I will only cite two passages concerning the Crucifixion.

( 246 )

The Christians have testified that the Jews sought Jesus in order
to crucify him;
And (in admitting this) they took no heed, though they had made
him a god for the sake of preserving him from disparagement
and reproach[2].
Because of the natural evil wherewith men are imbued, their
minds spurn the truth deposited in them[3].

[1] II. 146, 10.

[2] Mohammed rejects the Crucifixion (Koran, 4, 156): to him it was incredible that a prophet should suffer such an indignity. Ma'arrí, accepting neither the Christian nor the Mohammedan view of Jesus, regards the Crucifixion as an historical fact which proves the Christian doctrine to be absurd.

[3] *Luzúm*, II. 406, 1.

( 247 )

Marvellous! The Messiah amongst mankind, he who was said to be unbegotten!
The Christians delivered him to the Jews and confessed that they crucified him.
When a child is beaten by lads of the same age, the judicious and reasonable man takes pity on him;
And if what they say about Jesus is true, where was his father? How did He abandon His son to the enemy? Or do they suppose that they (the Jews) overcame Him?[1]

It was as easy for Ma'arrí to deny the divinity of Christ as it was difficult to express any doubts about the prophetic inspiration which, according to the Koran, he shared with Moses and Mohammed. The prophets stood or fell together. Frank scepticism being thus excluded, the poet resorts to his favourite weapon, but does not forget that the words "Mohammed is the Apostle of God" form half of the Moslem profession of faith.

( 248 )

Some parties declared that your God did not send Jesus and Moses (as prophets) to mankind,
But they only provided a means of livelihood for their followers and made a net to catch all men.
Had I been able, I would have punished those who were unconscionably impious, until (all) the miscreants were entombed[2].

At first sight these lines arouse no suspicion: the author means that disbelievers in prophecy are blasphemous scoundrels and ought to be punished with death[3]. This, of course, is

[1] II. 409, 4.
[2] II. 22, last line.
[3] Cf. II. 16, 9: "Men are such liars that an ignorant fellow asserts prophecy to be a fiction and a fraud"; and II. 416, 10: "Moses came forward with the Torah and devoted to perdition those who investigated (the authenticity of) it. His men said, 'Inspiration came to him,' while the wicked said, 'Nay, he forged it.'" In the language of orthodoxy rationalists are fools and knaves, and they sometimes borrow these names. Cf. Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, 262 foll., cited by Verrall, *Euripides the Rationalist*, p. 174. Ma'arrí recommends that sects which deny the divine Unity should be confronted with the unitarianism of the sword

the Moslem view. Ma'arrí durst not impugn it openly, and he may be professing it here, but readers familiar with his style will remark that the tag, "some people say," is often used by him to introduce rationalistic judgments for which he declines to be held accountable. Further, "they" in the second verse is equivocal: we can refer it, as we please, either to the disbelievers in prophecy or to the prophets themselves; and the latter reference is suggested by the rhyme-word *námús*, which in this context would naturally be taken as the Arabicised form of *νόμος*, so that the translation would run:

"And they (the prophets) only provided a means of livelihood for their followers and made a religious law for all men."

The verse has not passed unscathed through the hands of Mohammedan scribes. We find the oldest and probably genuine tradition in the Oxford Codex, where it stands thus:

وانّما جعلوا الرحمان مأكلةً * وصيّروا دينهم للمُلك ناموسا

"But they made the Merciful (God) a means of livelihood and turned their religion into a trick for gaining power."

Who, then, are the miscreants of the last verse? The heretics or the pseudo-prophets? If that question had been put to Ma'arrí, he might have answered by quoting his own advice:

"O credulous man, if thou art endowed with understanding, consult it; for every understanding is a prophet[1]."

When the poet writes a brief eulogy of Mohammed[2], he restricts himself to terms which might be used of any religious and moral reformer[3]. Only with the final blessing—

(II. 111, last line), and doubts whether the sword is "a faithful monotheist," seeing that it has spared the heretics for so long (II. 374, 1–2). For him, however, *ilḥád* (polytheism or atheism) is an offence against Reason (I. 423, 5).

[1] II. 428, 5:

ايّها الغِرُّ ان خُصصتَ بعقلٍ * فآسألنْهُ فكلّ عقلٍ نبىٌّ

[2] II. 214, 4–12.

[3] Cf. I. 379, 13: "I did not say, 'He was taken on a night-journey for a work which Allah set in train before the heavens revolved'"—an allusion to the *mi'ráj* or Ascension of the Prophet.

فصلّى عليه الله—comes a suggestion of the Moslem's attitude. "Do not begin a quarrel with me," he says, appealing to the Christians, "for in my opinion your Messiah is the peer of Mohammed," *i.e.* the prophets are just as much in the dark as all the rest of us[1].

Ma'arrí, in fact, regards Islam, and positive religion generally, as a *human* institution. As such, it is false and rotten to the core. Its founders sought to procure wealth and power for themselves, its dignitaries pursue worldly ends, its defenders rely on spurious documents which they ascribe to divinely inspired apostles, and its adherents accept mechanically whatever they are told to believe.

The following passages illustrate his point of view.

( 249 )

If knowledge aids not me nor baulks my foe,
The losers in Life's game are those who know.
As Allah laid our fortune, so it lies
For ever—O vain wisdom of the wise!
Can this doomed caitiff man, tho' far he fly,
'Scape from his Lord's dominion, earth and sky?
Nay, soon shall we, the hindmost gang, tread o'er
The path our fellow-slaves have trod before.
Surveying humankind, I marvel still
How one thirsts while another drinks his fill.
I draw my bow and every shaft flies wide,
The arrow aimed at me ne'er turns aside.

* * * * *

*O fools, awake! The rites ye sacred hold*
*Are but a cheat contrived by men of old,*
*Who lusted after wealth and gained their lust*
*And died in baseness—and their law is dust*[2].

[1] I. 295, 2:

لا تبدؤُونى بالعداوة منكُمُ * فمسيحُكم عندى نظيرُ محمّدِ
أيُغيثُ ضوءُ الصبح ناظرَ مُدلجٍ * ام نحن اجمعُ فى ظلام سرمَدِ

[2] I. 63, 9.

( 250 )

The Christian, as more anciently the Jew,
Told thee traditions far from proven true;
And Persia boasted of the Fire she lit,
No power ever should extinguish it.
These holy days are birds of the same feather,
Sabbath and Sunday make a pair together[1].

( 251 )

(Metre: *Wáfir*.)

This world of yours hath uttered a thing portentous:
O witnesses, hearken ye to its information!
When they that have understanding reflect and ponder,
They see in the tale it tells right cause for waking.
The people of all religions are in a quarrel
That keeps them as though on pebbles they lay unquiet.
The Christians have lied concerning the Son of Mary,
The Jews also lied concerning the Son of Amram.
And never the Days have brought forth new in nature,
Nor ever did Time depart from his ways accustomed[2].

( 252 )

Religion and infidelity, and stories that are related, and a Revelation[3] that is cited as authority, and a Pentateuch and a Gospel.
Lies are believed amongst every race; and was any race ever the sole possessor of Truth?[4]

[1] I. 158, last line.

[2] I. 260, 14. The last verse contrasts the vanity of Religion with the eternal and immutable process of Fate (cf. No. 263), and hints that what has been said of Christianity and Judaism applies equally to Islam. Cf. the poet's ironical tribute to the Law of Mohammed (I. 240, 15): "What a fine religion is this Law of ours! It stands firm, unabrogated, amidst that which has suffered abrogation."

[3] *Furqán*, properly meaning "deliverance" or "redemption," was used by Mohammed in the sense of "Revelation." Here it signifies "Koran," which Ma'arrí was too cautious to write, though it would have suited the metre just as well.

[4] *Luzúm*, II. 177, 9.

( 253 )

Fate governs all: what canst thou but bring in
Predestination as excuse for sin?
Our souls we live with, blind to them are we:
How, when the tomb contains them, shall we see?
So soon as forty years are overpast,
The body dwindles, and woes wax more vast.
Souls conscious of another life cross here
A bridge to it—a bridge of pain and fear.
*Who warrants a clear way for buried men*
*To rise dust-stained out of the grave again?*
*The world rolls on and on, the peoples die,*
*Despair believes a legend and a lie.*
*Sages profound, their cogitations ended,*
*Affirm what death has marred can ne'er be mended;*
*And Adam comes (they say) whence Awbar came,*
*And naught is known of Awbar but his name*[1].
*All that ye tell of God is vamped-up news,*
*Old fables artfully set out by Jews;*
*'Twas thus the Rabbins sought to sate their greed,*
*And ruin overtakes the wicked deed*[2].

( 254 )

Let thy soul practise virtue, forasmuch
'Tis best and fairest, not for guerdon's sake.

* * * *

The chiefs' disunion gives sworn evidence
Their followers have not found the way to Truth.

* * * *

They crossed the sands for wealth, and some attained it,
But safe was kept the Secret from them all[3].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 255 )

I found Truth was in a house well guarded by those within[4],
And trying the robber's way, about them I prowled and spied.

[1] Cf. p. 157, note 2. [2] I. 327, 13. [3] I. 142, 5.
[4] The *'ulamá*, who are the defenders and exponents of the orthodox Faith.

They said to me, "Get thee gone! No place for the like of thee
Beside us—and oh, beware of Truth when she eyes thee hard!
For seest thou not that we have happily brought her home,
Whilst thou art a castaway, a poor wretch with broken wings?"
The man that is famous for religion and piety,
He ranks not with one whose quest of knowledge distinguished
him.
But over thy mind, alas, thy tyrannous nature rules,
The passions in changeful sway increasingly grind it down.
Thou drankest a draught whereof, for coolness, none wished thee
joy,
And after the pangs of thirst thou sufferest choking pain[1].

( 256 )

They live as lived their fathers and receive
By rote the same religion which they leave,
Unheeding what they hear or what they say
Or whom they worship—far from Truth astray!
Want more delights the soul than ne'er so deep
In luxury like theirs to wake and sleep[2].

( 257 )

Our young man grows up in the belief to which his father has
accustomed him.
It is not Reason that makes him religious, but he is taught religion
by his next of kin.
The Persian's child had guardians who trained him in the rites of
Magianism[3].

( 258 )

I perceive that the Nights wear out Religion, even as the Shar'abí
mantle becomes outworn.
'Tis all (a matter of) custom: the greybeard follows the same bent
to which the youth is habituated[4].

[1] II. 56, 8.
[2] I. 248, 13.
[3] II. 403, 13. Cf. a passage in the *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán*, tr. in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1902, p. 351.
[4] II. 427, 6.

( 259 )

In all that concerns thee thou art satisfied with a blind conformity,
even in thy declaration that God is One and Single[1].
We have been commanded to think on His wondrous works; and
some persons, if they think on Him, fall into error.
All bigoted disputants, when they see the light of a manifest
truth, deny it[2].

( 260 )

They have not based their religion on any logical ground, whereby
they might decide between Shí'ites and Sunnís.
In the opinion of some whom I do not mention (with praise)[3], the
Black Stone is only a remnant of idols and (sacrificial) altar-
stones[4].

( 261 )

If a man of sound judgment appeals to his intelligence, he will
hold cheap the various creeds and despise them.
Do thou take thereof so much as Reason delivered (to thee), and
let not ignorance plunge thee in their stagnant pool![5]

( 262 )

Had they been left alone with Reason, they would not have accepted
a spoken lie; but the whips were raised (to strike them).
Traditions were brought to them, and they were bidden say, "We
have been told the truth"; and if they refused, the sword was
drenched (in their blood).
They were terrified by scabbards full of calamities, and tempted
by great bowls brimming over with food for largesse[6].

( 263 )

A blind man reading with his fingers' ends
The scrolls beside him—such is he that reads
The stars. Long hath he laboured, and how long

[1] Cf. II. 20, penult., and II. 321, last line: "If the wolf were to say, 'I have been sent by my Lord with a religion,' some of them would reply, 'Yes.'"

[2] I. 252, 2.

[3] This is ironical, for we cannot doubt that Ma'arrí agreed with the anonymous critics. Cf. No. 301.

[4] *Luzúm*, I. 129, last line.

[5] II. 416, 2.

[6] II. 266, 15.

Will pore o'er lines the writer blotted out!
Prophets arose and vanished: Moses, Jesus,
Mohammed last, who brought the prayers five—
And 'tis foretold there comes another Faith
Than this—and men still perishing away
Between a morrow and a yesterday.

But who dare warrant me the Faith, renewing
Its youthful spring, shall feed religious souls
That wellnigh faint with thirst? *Here*, fall what may,
Thou never wilt be free of moon and sun.
Like to the world's beginning is its end,
Its eve as full of portents as its dawn—
The young arriving and the old departing,
A house-quitting, a settling in a tomb.
God's curse upon this life! its gulfs of woe
Are very sooth, no sad deceiving tale.
I lift my voice whene'er I talk in vain,
But do I speak the truth, hushed are my lips again[1].

Life and death—these, for Ma'arrí, are the everlasting certainties. There may be a life after death, for aught we know, but it is only something to speculate about.

( 264 )

I have no knowledge of what is after death: already this nose-ring
hath made my nose bleed[2].
Night and dawn and heat and cold and house and graveyard!
How many a one before us sought to probe the mystery! but
Omnipotence proclaimed, "Never shalt thou probe it (to
the bottom)."[3]

As regards the soul and its relation to the body, while he sometimes follows Plato, he not seldom inclines to a materialistic view. Hence his meditations on immortality are vague and inconclusive.

[1] II. 36, 4.
[2] Cf. No. 330. He compares the fate which rules his life to the nose-ring by means of which a camel is led.
[3] *Luzúm*, I. 368, 9.

( 265 )

O spirit, how long wilt thou with pleasure wear
This body? Fling it off, 'tis worn threadbare[1].
If thou hast chosen to lodge thus all these years,
Thine is the blame—and smiles oft end in tears.
Or if the fault was Fate's, then thou art blind,
As water feels no barrier, though confined.
Wert thou not there, to sin it ne'er had stirred,
But would have lain like earth without a word.
The lamp of mind neglecting, thou dost stray,
Although in Reason's light thou hast a God-given ray[2].

( 266 )

The body, which gives thee during life a form,
Is but thy vase: be not deceived, my soul!
Cheap is the bowl thou storest honey in,
But precious for the contents of the bowl[3].

( 267 )

My body and my spirit are like a child and its mother: they are tied, that to this, by the hand of the Lord.
They die simultaneously[4], and neither is the body lost (to the spirit) nor does the spirit lose (the body)[5].

[1] The idea that the spirit corrupts and wears out the body is expressed in the following passages: "Does my spirit blame my body, which never ceased to serve it until it (the body) became too weak? And yet my spirit laid upon it amazing burdens, now one by one, now two at a time. The state of Man is contrary to that of trees, for they (being void of spirit) bear fruit, whilst he commits sin" (I. 78, 1). "The spirit's dwelling in the body makes it (the body) diseased, and its departure restores it (the body) to health. The body, when it returns to earth, does not feel the winds that sweep away its dust in the grave" (II. 421, 3). "If a spirit dwelt in the mountains of the earth, neither Naḍádi nor Iráb would be everlasting" (I. 91, 3; cf. 287, 5).

[2] II. 22, 10.

[3] II. 92, 12.

[4] Literally, "like the two eyes which converge (on the object of vision)."

[5] I. 243, 6.

( 268 )

When a spirit is joined to a body, the one and the other are
ever in the sickness of carking pain.
If thou art wind, O wind, be still! or if thou art flame, O flame,
be quenched![1]

( 269 )

(Metre: *Basiṭ.*)

The soul was ever before to-day in comfort and peace,
Until by Allah's decree it made the body its home;
But now the twain not an instant suffer thee to be free
Of pain and smart, let alone malice and enviousness.
The ignoble man says to Pelf, which set him over the folk,
"Yea, thee will I honour: but for thee, I never had ruled."[2]

( 270 )

The spirit is a subtle thing, confined
Close in the body, unperceived by mind[3].
Glory to God! will it retain the power
To judge aright? and will it in the hour
Of exit feel what then it must explore?
That 'tis that sheds on bodies dark a light
Of beauty as of lamps discerned beneath the night.
'Twill stay beside its body, some pretend;
Some think on meeting Death it will ascend[4]—
But never they that watch him take his toll
Will smell the fragrance of a human soul.
Happiest of all the hermit who doth ban
The sons o' the world and dies a childless man[5].

( 271 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

We buried them in the earth, ay, surely we buried them;
But all that we know about their souls is conjecture.
And man's searching after lore which Allah enscrolled and sealed
Is reckoned a madness or akin to a madness[6].

[1] I. 295, 8. [2] I. 283, 12.

[3] The body is the cage or prison of the spirit (I. 231, 5, 11; II. 378, 10–11).

[4] Ma'arrí often adopts this opinion. Cf. I. 244, 5; 256, penult.; II. 262, 5, etc.

[5] *Luzúm*, I. 211, 6.

[6] II. 366, 11. The third line, if translated according to the text of the Oxford manuscript, will run as follows: "And man's eating that which fears to die, even as he himself."

( 272 )

Time passes and in tomb the body lays:
Did ever man rejoice in length of days?
And some opine the soul of earthly mould;
Nay, for it mounts to heaven (as others hold),
And whether it remove to bale or bliss,
Wears in that world the form it had in this;
Where, being incarnate, it must suffer pain
Still to be dressed and eat and drink in vain.
'Tis certain Allah's power, resistless, dread,
Can judge His creatures and can raise the dead.
Behold and marvel how the planets, some
Endowed with voices, roll, tho' rumoured dumb.
Obey not rascals who religion use
Only to clutch increasing revenues.
A Jew that bears in hand the Torah, greed
Incites him, not a holy wish to read.
What feuds between us hath religion twined
And given us o'er to hates of every kind!
Did not a prophet's ordinance bestow
On Arab lords the women of their foe?[1]

( 273 )

When the soul leaves
This frame to which it cleaves,
Some say it after grieves.

If with it go
The Reason, it may know
And recollect past woe.

Else, all the reams
O'erwrit with dead men's dreams
Are wasted ink, meseems![2]

[1] I. 185, 11.

[2] I. 140, 5. The "dead men's dreams" ("ravings," in the original) refer to the descriptions of a future life which occur in the books of Revelation.

( 274 )

If, when my spirit shall take the road to death,
My mind escort it, well mayst thou admire;
And if in vasty air it go to naught,
Even as my body in earth, alas the ruin!
The one religion is that thou be just
To all—and what religion owneth he
That scorns due right? Man cannot lead his soul
To virtue, though he lead a host in arms.
Would he but fast a month from sin, 'twould serve him
Instead of fasting through Sha'bán and Rajab.
I imitated in nobility
None, but in death I follow noble princes.
Beware the curse of wronged night-brooding wretch!
All barriers oft are pierced by sobs of prayer[1].

( 275 )

Some have asserted that the souls continue to exist (after death),
shackled in their bodies and being purified,
And that they are removed thence (after a time), and the blest
man meets with an honourable fate, while the unblest is
stripped (of honour)[2].

( 276 )

Dead are the stars of night or sentient beings?
Irrational, or does reason dwell in them?
Some men believe in retribution, some
Declare ye are only herbs that grow and fade;
But I enjoin you to shun wickedness
And not to hate fair deeds. I have observed
How oft the soul, her hour of parting nigh,
Will show contrition for the sins she wrought;
And if our spirits now rust in us, anon
Like brass re-burnished they may newly shine[3].

Ma'arrí rejects the doctrine of metempsychosis and even derides it. In the *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán* he quotes these verses

[1] I. 103, 9.
[2] I. 81, 2.
[3] II. 171, 3.

by one of the Nuṣayrís, a sect which had many adherents in the districts lying south and west of the river Orontes:

Marvel, mother, at the accidents of Time, that made our sister
dwell in a mouse.
Drive these cats away from her and let her have the straw in
the sack[1].

So in the *Luzúm*:

(277)

O apple-eater, mayst thou not perish! and let none mourn thee
as lost on the day of thy death!
The Nuṣayrí said—not I (hearken, therefore, and encourage thy
recreants on the battle-field!):
"Thou hast been an apple in thy time, and the apple thou eatest
was once thine eater."[2]

(278)

'Tis said that spirits remove by transmigration
From body into body, till they are purged;
But disbelieve what error may have urged,
Unless thy mind confirm the information.

Tho' high their heads they carry, like the palm,
Bodies are but as herbs that grow and fade.
Hard polishing wears out the Indian blade,
Allay thy soul's desires and live calm[3].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) (279)

Oh, long, very long, hath been the way to the night-rider
Who sees in the pitchy dark no flame stirred to leaping.
Obedience to Law we found a yoke on the minds of men,
Tho' none that hath proved the Days denies abrogation.
If once on a time some Jews were changed into animals[4],

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1902, p. 349.

[2] *Luzúm*, II. 166, 16.

[3] II. 171, 9. With the last verse cf. I. 207, 7 foll.: "None knows Time but they that do not abase themselves in defeat or exult in success.... They are the clear-sighted: whether they know or conjecture, I deem that they are at rest in a plain certainty."

[4] This verse alludes to a legend (cf. Koran, 2, 61) that in David's time certain Jews who went fishing on the sabbath were transformed by God into apes.

What aileth this age that no such miracle happens?
And some transmigrationist fanatics have gone so far,
They deem souls alive in plants or minerals and metals.
How generous soe'er thou be and fain to forgive, yet more
Forgiving our Maker is, and more open-handed[1].

The fact that the Koran reveals the existence of angels and other good and evil spirits (Jinn) does not hinder Ma'arrí from using his long experience of life as an argument for incredulity[2]. If there are no human beings in Heaven, then there are no angels on earth or below it[3]. God is omnipotent: therefore angels are possible; and at this point our knowledge ends.

( 280 )

I deny not the power of Allah to create forms of light, fleshless
and bloodless—
And the seer is blind like me: come on, then, let us knock
against one another in the dark![4]

( 281 )

Fear thou the Lord, unafraid, albeit in darkness
With tales of Jinn they scare thee and make thee fearful.
All that is a patched-up bogey for beguiling
The thoughtless and stupid. Far from thee such stuff be![5]

He also finds unconvincing the tradition that women who wear anklets are loved and followed by evil spirits[6].

Resurrection and Retribution are the twin corner-stones of Islam. We have seen what Ma'arrí thought of the authority on which these doctrines depend, and we know that he could not take them ready-made from that source. If he had any genuine belief in them, it was based on grounds which he considered reasonable. To judge from his writings, he neither believed nor wholly disbelieved in a conscious existence after death, but remained a sceptic because no empirical evidence was forthcoming. Besides, what proof would have satisfied a mind like his? Not, I think, our books of

[1] *Luzúm*, I. 238, last line. [2] See No. 54. [3] *Luzúm*, II. 145, 5.
[4] II. 327, 1. [5] I. 176, 6. [6] II. 93, 1.

psychical research, much as they might have interested him. Clearly, if he was unable to affirm the immortality of the soul, he would be even less inclined to admit the resurrection of the body, a doctrine which he sometimes professes in agreement with the Koran, while in other poems his real attitude towards it is hardly disguised.

Most of the passages written from the orthodox standpoint are formal in tone[1]. Here is one in a different vein, but we cannot suppose that it was meant to be taken seriously:

( 282 )

The astrologer and physician, both of them,
Deny the resurrection of the body.
"Oh, get ye gone!" said I; "if your belief
Be true, then I lose nothing; or if mine,
'Tis upon you perdition falls, not me."[2]

The *possibility* of such a resurrection is acknowledged:

By the wisdom of my Creator comes to pass my folding and unfolding,
And the Creator is not incapable of raising me from the dead[3].

( 283 )

As for the Resurrection, the controversy about it is notorious, but the mystery thereof is not revealed.
Some have said that the pearl of the diver will never return to the darkness of the shell[4];
But the wonders of Almighty God are many: our reason contemplating them becomes infirm and dumbfounded[5].

This is designedly "economical" and its meaning could not be missed by any intelligent reader of the *Luzúm*. I will quote a few more examples.

[1] See Nos. 145, 181, 192, 195, 232, 233.
[2] *Luzúm*, II. 290, 7.
[3] I. 391, 15:

بحكمة خالقى طيّى ونشرى * وليس بمعجز الخلّاق حشرى

Cf. No. 272.
[4] *I.e.* the soul will never be re-united to the body.
[5] *Luzúm*, I. 337, 4.

( 284 )

(Metre: *Wáfir.*)

Our bodies are raised by feet of travellers passing
In gloom of the night across some crumbling sand-flat.
A life and a death—'tis all that our fate shows clearly,
Tho' pietists work in hope of a resurrection.
No foot is imparadised by a dainty anklet,
No ear is beatified by a pearly earring[1].

( 285 )

Death's debt is then and there
Paid down by dying men;
But 'tis a promise bare
That they shall rise again[2].

( 286 )

With optic glass go question thou the stars that roll o'erhead,
The stars that take away the taste of honey gatherèd[3]:
They point to death, no doubt, but not to rising from the dead[4].

( 287 )

O star, in heaven thou shinest from of old
And point'st a flawless moral to the wise.
Death's fixed and certain date thou hast foretold;
Then why not tell us when the dead shall rise?[5]

( 288 )

We laugh, but inept is our laughter,
We should weep, and weep sore,
Who are shattered like glass and thereafter
Remoulded no more[6].

[1] I. 200, penult.

[2] I. 259, last line.

[3] Cf. II. 169, 7 and *supra* p. 151 fol.

[4] I. 392, 14. Cf. II. 68, 3: "How oft did the Ashráṭ stars shine forth in the mirk of night! but when shall any signs (*ashrâṭ*) appear of our resurrection?"—and Plato's famous epigram on the other side:

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἑῷος
νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

[5] I. 408, 4.

[6] II. 143, 6. Cf. II. 75, 8–9.

( 289 )

Were thy body left after death in the state which it was in before, we might have hoped for its restoration (to life),
Even as wine returned once again to the emptied jar that was not broken in pieces;
But it became parts divided, and then atoms of dust ever being swept away in the wind-blasts[1].

In his references to the Mohammedan doctrine of future rewards and punishments the poet is similarly versatile. He often writes as one who believes in Paradise and Hell and even in the Koranic representation of them[2]. He says more than once that he hopes, not to enter the Garden, but to be saved from the Fire[3]; and he accepts the dogma of everlasting damnation qualified sometimes by faith in the infinite mercy of God.

( 290 )

Dust of mine ancient mother I shake off,
And that is deemed a cutting of one's kin.
Oh, little I care what Allah threateneth
His creatures with, if once the Fire consume
And char my limbs to ashes. But—'tis life
Endless, an immortality of pain
Whilst ages pass, and mercy nevermore[4].

God will not let the labours of the pious be lost: on that point Abú Nuwás, the libertine, concurs with Abu 'l-'Atáhiya, the ascetic[5]. Manifestly, virtue is not rewarded in *this* world[6]. Do good for its own sake: the Almighty can, if He please, bestow the *thawáb* upon us; otherwise, Death is our recompense[7]. The following passages are more or less tinged with scepticism.

[1] II. 420, 2.
[2] *E.g.* I. 153, penult. and foll.
[3] I. 416, 8; II. 164, 10; 373, 2.
[4] II. 286, 17. Cf. I. 154, 4–6. As regards the mercy of God and His power to transfer the damned to Paradise, see I. 153, penult.; II. 358, 2.
[5] I. 374, 1–2.
[6] I. 413, 16.
[7] I. 434, 7–8.

( 291 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*)

If Death come but to erase the form and person of me
And ruin that which I wrought, then all Life's trouble is vain.
It may be some shall receive a recompense from their Lord
When Him they meet, forasmuch they often fasted and prayed[1].

( 292 )

They averred that I shall grow young again. How, oh, how may
that come to me, although I desire it?
And I shall visit Paradise, they say, and my face will be made
bright with gladness after the long decay in the tomb,
And the evil eyes will be removed from me, if it be my fate to
be dipped there in the fountain of life[2].

( 293 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

Astray did I amble on? or fated to reach the plain
Abounding in meadows fair, where herbs never cease to spring?—
And over my camels Night lay brooding so lone and still,
Her stars, thou mightst think, were Jews whose journey the
Sabbath stayed.
A tale that is told about the guarded preserve, 'twas that
Aroused me, but no sure man is he who related it[3].

( 294 )

If blest I shall be proven past denying,
Oh, would in earth's lap I were lying!
After my lifelong fast,
Who knows?—I may at last
Keep holiday upon my day of dying.
Their tales about the reckoning and awarding
Scared me, but 'twas in vain they talked.
Its farness did beguile
My fears, tho' all the while
On right and left of me there walked
An angel, every act recording.

* * * *

If true we hope will come
The promise, how not fear the threat of doom?[4]

[1] I. 160, 4. [2] II. 44, 8. [3] I. 157, 4. [4] I. 259, 3.

( 295 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*)

And men see the last of me the day when shall o'er me close
The deep well of Death whose sides are lined with the hateful stones.
Does any one going hence expect robes of green beyond,
When these dusky shrouds within the earth have been torn to shreds?
To me thereanent came news, a medley of tangled tales,
By ways that perplex and foil men eager to know the truth.
Ay, short of it fell the Zoroastrian archimage,
The bishop of Christian folk, the rabbin and scribe of Jews,
And wrote legends of their own in volumes which long ago
Have surely been lost, their ink and paper consumed away.
The sects disagreed about the happenings after death,
And those are engulfing seas whereof none may reach the shore.
'Twas said, "Human souls have power and freedom in what they do,"
And some answered, "Nay, 'tis plain they act by necessity."
And oh, had our bodies been created of marble rock,
They scarce had endured the shocks of ever recurring change[1].

( 296 )

We hope for that world's bliss,
Although our deeds in this
Are not so fair that we should hope Heaven's balconies.

Folk carry not from here
The gauds of wealth and gear,
But laden with their sins depart and disappear.

Reason was dumb. "Ask, then,"
Said I, "the reverend men";
But naught could they decide: this lay beyond their ken.
They talked and lied. When pressed
To put all to the test
Of logic, they broke down in impotence confessed[2].

[1] I. 313, 1.

[2] II. 99, penult.

As Ma'arrí appeals to Reason against Revelation, so does he contrast the observance of religion with the practice of morality. Not that pietism is inconsistent with virtue, but it is distinctly subordinate: prayers, fasts, and almsgivings are all very well; righteousness is essential. The emphasis placed upon the latter implies a certain indifference to the former and almost conveys the impression that *le mieux est l'ennemi du bon.*

( 297 )

You think the pious man is he
That worships there on bended knee.
Look out! for sadly you mistake,
Meseems you are but half-awake[1].

( 298 )

Praise God and pray,
Walk seventy times, not seven, the Temple round—
And impious remain!
Devoutness is to them unknown that may
Enjoy, and are not found
With courage to abstain[2].

( 299 )

If thou wilt put into practice the plain texts which are the foundation of the Book (the Koran), thou wilt find them sufficient for the performance of thy obligations.
Neither a (book of) Revelation nor a sermon relieved thy mind (from doubt), but wert thou obedient to God, a single verse would relieve thee[3].

When the poet says, "Fear and obey God," he means, of course, "shun evil and do good." This, in his eyes, is the kernel of the Koran.

( 300 )

O fool! thou didst esteem thyself religious:
I swear by Allah thou hast no religion.
Thou mak'st the pilgrimage devoutly—meanwhile
Some poor retainer, injured, cries against thee[4].

[1] I. 277, 6. [2] II. 159, last line. [3] II. 152, penult.
[4] II. 332, last line.

Ma'arrí's criticism of Islam goes to the root of the matter. If he is right, there is an end of the divine authority on which the whole system rests: its laws and institutions can be judged on their merits and approved or rejected as the principles of a rational ethic require. From this standpoint its ascetic features (including the prohibition of wine) commended themselves to him. Although, by his own confession, he was somewhat lax in regard to public worship[1], he assails only one—and that the most vulnerable—of the five "pillars" of Mohammedanism. The Ḥajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) was taken over by the Prophet from the pagan Arabs and incorporated in Islam as a concession to national sentiment: all Moslem men and women are bound, "if they can find a way," to perform it at least once in their lives. Ma'arrí had a good excuse for neglecting this injunction, which in any case he would have disobeyed. Others might be impressed by the religious enthusiasm of the pilgrims; he saw in the Ḥajj a relic of heathendom[2], a carnival of superstition and immorality.

( 301 )

Fortune is (so strangely) allotted, that rocks are visited (by pilgrims) and touched with hands and lips,
Like the Holy Rock (at Jerusalem) or the two Angles of Quraysh[3], howbeit all of them are stones that once were kicked[4].

( 302 )

Methinks, the metropolis (Mecca) is deserted and her ants have departed from her villages[5].
And how oft did the companies (of pilgrims) journey by night towards Ṣaláḥ[6] and suffer great hardships in their journey!

[1] See No. 179.

[2] Cf. I. 391, 1: "May thy intelligence save thee from a heathen's journey to visit Ayla and the land of Nakhr!" Ayla is the name of a mountain between Mecca and Medina. I cannot find any mention of Nakhr; the name may perhaps refer to Muntakhar (*Táju 'l-'Arús*) or Muntakhir (Yáqút), a place in the same district.

[3] One of these is the south-eastern angle of the Ka'ba, containing the celebrated Black Stone; the other may refer to the base of the northern wall where lies a stone which is supposed to mark the sepulchre of Ismá'íl (Ishmael).

[4] II. 353, 6.

[5] See p. 98.

[6] A name of Mecca.

Every year they used to come to the (holy) building, that they
might cast their foul deeds upon its back—
Guests whom Allah entertained not with forgiveness, but with
calamities He entertained them.
Why should I travel to the stones of a temple in whose precinct
cups of wine are drunk,
And the earth of its water-courses, since they existed, hath ever
been defiled by harlots?[1]

( 303 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

I see multitudes that hope the grace of their Lord to win
By kissing a corner-stone and wearing a crucifix.
But pardon me, O my God! At Mecca shall I throw on
Amongst pilgrims newly come the raiment of one insane[2],
And go down to water-pools along with some fine fellows
From Yemen, who never cared to dig for themselves a well?[3]

( 304 )

Stay at home! No obligation
I account the Pilgrimage,
Lady, on thy sex in virgin
Youth nor yet in wedded age.

Mecca's valley breeds the worst of
Miscreants, who never feel
Fierceness to defend the weaker,
Never flame with knightly zeal.

Men of Shayba, temple-guardians,
Standing there bemused with wine[4],
Shove the pilgrim-folk in couples
Through the gateway of the Shrine.

When the people throng around it,
Leave to enter they refuse
None that slips a piece of silver—
Christians jostle in with Jews[5].

[1] *Luzúm*, II. 416, 14.
[2] *I.e.* the pilgrim's dress (*iḥrám*).
[3] I. 126, last line.
[4] Cf. I. 208, last line.
[5] Cf. II. 222, 9.

Lady, canst thou do a kindness?
Bless, then, having power to bless,
And if Charity invite thee
To a good act, answer "Yes"!

Oh, if dupes e'er heeded warning,
Surely wouldst thou recognise
That I tear from specious falsehood
Its invisible disguise.

Put no trust in their inventions:
Crafty were the plots they spun,
But they rode the way to ruin
And their race is wellnigh run.

Though awhile they galloped bravely,
They will soon give up the chase,
For against eternal Justice
Idle 'tis to run a race.

* * * *

Some there be with eyes unsleeping,
Feigning in the darkness sleep;
And their words belie their deep thoughts,
And their thoughts in doubt sink deep[1].

We have noted how the poet censures whatever seems to him superstitious and irrational. Thus, to mention some slighter instances, he condemns augury[2] and belief in omens, *e.g.* the custom of exclaiming "God be praised!" (*al-ḥamd*) when any one sneezes[3]. He declares that the descendants of Ham owe their colour to nature, not to the sins of their progenitor[4]. Concerning the legends which attribute extraordinary length of life to certain patriarchs, heroes, and wizards[5], he remarks that those who reckoned the age of such persons appear to have counted months as years[6]. In

[1] I. 70, 2.
[2] I. 325, 5; II. 237, 2.
[3] II. 19, 6–7; 353, 9.
[4] II. 145, 3–4.
[5] See Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie*, part 2: *das Kitáb al-mu'ammarín des Abú Ḥátim al-Sijistání*.
[6] I. 418, 1–3. Cf. I. 353, 13 foll., where he ridicules the legend of the mysterious wanderer, al-Khiḍr, who conversed with Moses and is generally thought by Moslems to be still alive.

his opinion, holy men never flew in air or walked on water[1]. The words, "if thou wilt devote thy heart entirely to God, the beasts of prey will do thee no hurt[2]," immediately follow an exhortation to act according to reason and cannot be taken as evidence of his belief in miracles; the context rather suggests that "the beasts of prey" are women of bad character. He had nothing of the mystical spirit, and his allusions to Ṣúfism—a name which in his time covered much vagabondage and licence—are contemptuous. He gives the correct derivation from *ṣúf* (wool):

> Ṣúfís—their name bore witness to Reason that they are woolly sheep with necks (hanging as though) broken[3].

He doubts whether their rapture is so religious as they pretend[4], calls them "one of Satan's armies[5]," and accuses them of travelling from land to land to fill their bellies and gratify their lusts[6]. This description, however, applies only to the evil-doers amongst them: "the God-fearing (Ṣúfí), when thou wouldst rival him, surpasses thee; he is like the sun, whose radiance no defilement comes near, and the full moon, which is too glorious to be affected by vituperation[7]." That a free-thinker should speak of mystics with admiration and respect will not surprise those who remember how often extremes meet. Free-thought and mysticism converge from opposite sides in order to strike at orthodoxy. Ṣúfís, who regard forms of creed and ritual as *relatively* true and therefore as obstacles to the attainment of essential truth, have something in common with *zindíqs* like Ma'arrí, who "acknowledge neither prophet nor sacred book[8]" nor any law that is not sanctioned by the inner light of reason. Both these ways of thought are hostile to sectarianism and lead in

[1] II. 386, 9–11.

[2] I. 394, 11.

[3] II. 54, 4. The last words depict the characteristic attitude of Ṣúfís when engaged in "meditation" or "recollection." In another verse (I. 104, 10; cf. II. 101, 10) Ma'arrí, referring to the derivation from *ṣafw* (purity) which most Ṣúfís favour, says mockingly that if they were really "pure" the name "Ṣafwí" would not have been altered to "Ṣúfí."

[4] I. 195, 5–6; II. 54, 7.

[5] I. 104, 11.

[6] II. 384, 13–14; I. 295, 14 (No. 140).

[7] I. 104, last line.

[8] *Risálatu 'l-Ghufrán*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1902, p. 97.

practice to a large toleration which places Jews and Christians on the same level with Moslems. Many poems in the *Luzúm* express the view that "man's inhumanity to man" is fostered and made fiercer by religion, while in others the poet protests against bigotry[1], pleads for religious equality, and declares that if men act rightly it does not matter what they believe.

( 305 )

Falsehood hath so corrupted all the world,
Ne'er deal as true friends they whom sects divide;
But were not hate Man's natural element,
Churches and mosques had risen side by side[2].

( 306 )

As I live, they that take refuge (with God) are safe from trouble,
whereas the fanatical hater was gripped (by his foe) and grappled with him.
Therefore, O Quss (Christian bishop), sign an order to pay the fees
of the *khaṭíb* (Moslem preacher), and do thou, O Manasseh,
fill the office of *názir* (warden) in our mosque[3].

( 307 )

Was not the notary ashamed when his reputation was evil in the
ears of men?
Thy (Christian) deacon did not judge unjustly, nor was thy Jew
covetous (corruptible).

[1] See p. 103 and cf. *Luzúm*, II. 63, 7; 279, last line; 310, 1–2.

[2] II. 82, 4.

[3] II. 53, last line. Quss and Manash (Manasseh) seem to be used here as typical Christian and Jewish names, without reference to persons. Moslems would associate the former with Quss ibn Sá'ida, the celebrated bishop of Najrán, by whose eloquence Mohammed is said to have been stirred. As regards Manasseh, Professor Bevan has pointed out that a Jew of this name was chosen to be viceroy of Syria by the Fáṭimid Caliph, al-'Azíz (*ob.* A.D. 996). His nomination gave deep offence to the Moslems of Egypt and on their petition he was arrested and heavily fined (Ibnu 'l-Athír, ed. Tornberg, vol. IX. p. 81). The duties of the *názir* are explained by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. I. p. 102.

In my opinion, the (Christian) priest is better for thee than a
Moslem who preaches in the congregational mosque[1].

( 308 )

Ye wronged others, and they in turn were made to prevail against
you: the best of men pronounce mankind to be wrong-doers.
Ye treated the metropolitan of the Christians with indignity,
though he was revered by the followers of Mary's son;
And yet your own Prophet said to you, "When he that is
honoured by his people comes (amongst you), show him
honour!"
Therefore, let not your *khaṭíb* return with rancour when he meets
them (the Christians) and they withhold from him his due
meed of respect[2].

( 309 )

If a man refrain from injuring me, then may (divine) bounty and
mercy bless him as long as he lives!
Let him read the Book of Moses, if he will, or let him, if he likes,
conceive in his heart devotion to Isaiah[3].

After what we have seen of Ma'arrí's views on the subject of religion it is evident that he would not be described accurately by any designation which connotes belief in a divine Word revealed through prophecy or in a religious code deriving its authority from tradition. His whole creed might be expressed in some such formula as "God, the Creator, is One: fear and obey Him[4]." The nearest Arabic equivalent to "deist" is *zindíq*; but this term is opprobrious and commonly associated with immorality, being applied by Moslems not only to deists, atheists, pantheists, and persons suspected of holding Zoroastrian or Manichaean doctrines, but also to all sorts of antinomian heretics. The poet brands with the name *zindíq* religious impostors whose tenets he

[1] II. 93, 5. Rather than allow the poet to say that a bad Moslem is inferior to a good Christian, the commentator would have us believe that in this verse the word *qass* does not signify "priest," but "seeking the means of livelihood"!

[2] II. 407, 12.

[3] II. 430, last line.

[4] Cf. I. 433, 7–8; II. 92, 16; 329, 12.

considers false and irrational[1]. Some of this class—possibly Carmathians—are addressed in the following lines.

( 310 )

Ye cast the creeds behind,
Tho' nowhere do ye find
In Wisdom they should be rejected and dismissed.

Obedience ye refuse
The Moslem judge, the Jews'
Rabbi, the Christian bishop, and the Magian priest.

Let *your* law be in turn
Offered to them ye spurn,
All will cry, "Nay; we don't desire it in the least[2]."

His own religion is founded on the authority of reason and fulfilled by the practice of virtue. Not a sanctified law, but an enlightened mind, distinguishes good from evil. "Serve God alone, without reference to His servants (creatures); for the law (of religion) makes us slaves, while (the use of) logical judgment makes us free[3]." True religion consists in righteousness together with justice and charity to all men[4].

The one religion is that thou be just
To all—and what religion owneth he
That scorns due right?[5]

( 311 )

Thy understanding's mirror shows thee evil[6],
If there thou seest aught thy conscience owns not.

[1] II. 137, 10–11.
[2] I. 304, 4.
[3] I. 326, 13:

كن عابدًا للّه دون عبيده * فالشرع يُعبد والقياس يحرّر

[4] Religion is also defined as "the voluntary abandonment of pleasures whilst one is healthy and capable of enjoying them" (I. 361, penult.); as "sincerity combined with innocence" (I. 438, 7); and as "kindness and gentleness" (II. 111, 6).
[5] No. 274. Cf. II. 294, 9: "A dirhem unjustly gained entails more severe punishment (hereafter) than a neglected fast or prayer."
[6] Cf. No. 12.

The splendidest of all thy deeds is that one
By doing which thou mean'st to take a right course;
And best of all thy words, "To God the glory."[1]

Like Socrates and the Greeks generally, he takes morality to be "rather a concern of the head than of the heart." The wickedness of human nature is repeatedly described as "ignorance" and "folly." There are two kinds of ignorance, he says, which bring men to perdition: one of these is constitutional, the other they learn from their preceptors[2]. Virtue is the fruit of knowledge; the understanding, not the will, controls and corrects the impulses of the flesh[3]. In accordance with the view that evil needs only to be known in order to be shunned, the poet teaches moral truth by exposing the universal falsehood of mankind for the sake of the few who will listen to reason and let themselves be guided by it[4]. As we have seen, his ideal of virtue demands world-flight[5], but on the other hand his ethical doctrine inculcates "as the highest and holiest duty a conscientious fulfilment of one's obligations...towards all living beings[6]."

( 312 )

(Metre: *Basíṭ*.)

Virtue is neither a fast consuming those who it keep,
Nor any office of prayer nor rough fleece wrapped on the limbs.
'Tis nothing but to renounce and throw all evil away
And sweep the breast clear and clean of malice, envy, and spite.
Whate'er the lion profess, no true abstainer is he,
So long as wild beasts and tame fear lest their necks may be broke[7].

( 313 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

What! seest thou not that vice in man's nature is inborn,
But virtue a new unheired possession which minds acquire?
My heart hath been wrung to watch some morning a savage boor
Belabouring his ass with blows—he takes on his head a sin.

[1] I. 227, 15. [2] II. 256, 7–8. [3] See Nos. 206 and 207.
[4] I. 229, 6–8. [5] P. 125 and foll.
[6] Von Kremer, *Philos. Gedichte des Abu 'l-'Ald*, p. 38. I have left out the words "with equal warmth and affection," which seem to me ill-suited to describe the general character of Ma'arrí's philanthropy.
[7] *Luzúm*, I. 285, 13.

The tired beast beyond its strength he burdens, and if it flag,
He sets on it with his lash, whilst stubbornly it endures—
Until it grows like unto a whoremonger, one unwed,
On whom falls the penalty of scourging, and not by halves[1].
Weals rise on its back and flanks, the visible marks of woe;
Oh, pardon a helpless brute too feeble to plod along!
A Maker have we: the mind, undoubting, confesses Him
Eternal—then what avails this birth of a latter day?[2]
And grant that you rub and rub the fire-stick of Right in vain,
Still less from those sticks of Wrong can ever you coax a spark.
It gladdens me not, that I inflict on a fellow-man
Injustice, and live in ease and opulence all the while[3].

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*) (314)

Virtue is like unto twigs of '*arfaj* sodden with rain:
The shepherd sets them alight—they crackle, blaze, and expire;
Vice like a fire of tough *ghaḍá* wood kindled at night:
A long while passes, and still its coals keep smouldering on.

* * * * * *

I charge thee, draw not a sword for bloodshed: deem it enow
That here the slaughterous blade of Time is ever unsheathed.
A rumour ran in the world—I know it not as a fact—
That certain men have reviled the One Upholder of all.
What! laud a man, tho' his mind was turned not once in his days
To noble haviour, and leave the Lord of good without laud![4]

If in some passages Ma'arrí allows that good works may earn the *thawáb* (recompense from God)[5], his rational and philosophical judgment rejects a *quid pro quo* morality and declares that, as virtue is commonly its own reward in this world, it ought to be practised "because 'tis best and fairest[6]," without expectation of favours to come.

[1] An unmarried man who commits adultery is punished by the infliction of one hundred stripes, if he be free; but if he be a slave, the number of stripes is reduced by half.

[2] Apparently the poet refers to the vanity of human life and action.

[3] *Luzúm*, I. 241, 4.

[4] I. 270, penult.

[5] I. 59, 6; 364, 1; 437, 7. Cf. p. 187, *supra*.

[6] No. 254. Cf. I. 434, 7: "Seek what is good and practise it for the sake of its excellence, and do not judge that the Lord will requite thee for it."

( 315 )

O sons of Eve, refrain from lying boasts!
Ye have no honour with the Lord of Hosts.
'Twas not your wickedness caused drought and bane,
Nor did your true repentance bring you rain[1].

( 316 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

When, having bestowed a boon, thou meet'st with ingratitude,
Repine not, for He who keeps His word gives thee recompense[2].
'Twere pity a gentleman should only do right in fear
Of public disgrace, if men report him a wrong-doer.
The good that thou dost, oh, far away from it put reward
Expected or certain gain, as though thou wert huckstering![3]

( 317 )

(Metre: *Ṭawíl*.)

Ay, oft-times a man hath been asleep to his doom, until
Death came of a sudden to him, and he drowsing, half-awake.
Whenever thou doest good, impute it with single mind
To Allah, and spurn the tongues desirous of praising thee.
Misfortune although it be to live in this world of ours,
Consolement thou find'st in acts of virtue and charity[4].

( 318 )

Forbidden is thy baser self to quit
The body ere evil thou with good repay[5].
For God's, not men's sake give thy benefit,
And from their eyes brush drowsiness away[6].

[1] I. 319, 6. Cf. II. 223, 14–15. Prayers for rain cannot alter the course of Fate (II. 252, 11–12).

[2] Cf. II. 154, 15:

"Be thou in purpose and deed a benefactor of men,
Although they pay not again the debt of kindness to thee."

[3] I. 312, 8.

[4] II. 341, 14.

[5] Cf., however, I. 422, 2: "Repel evil, when it comes, with evil, and be humble, for thou art only a man"; and II. 378, 1: "Do not repay evil with good, and if in any matter I fail to keep faith with thee, then do thou break faith with me."

[6] *Luzúm*, II. 342, 2.

Ma'arrí especially enjoins forbearance, compassion, and kindness. A man should be lenient to others, but severe to himself[1]. "Charity is the best of thy beliefs: be not heedless thereof, and thou mayst pray facing the Ka'ba (as Moslems do) or after the fashion of Zoroastrians[2]." "How is it that the rich do not share their abundance with the poor?[3]" The ways of true generosity are unknown to those who grudge their fellow-creatures what they bestow on their near relatives[4]. Injustice to the weak and helpless excites his indignation: he pities old men neglected by their sons[5], and pleads for humane treatment of slaves[6]; but he is most deeply touched—this is an Indian trait—by wrong done to animals, birds, and insects[7].

( 319 )

How for her dead should Earth have care,
When in the moment of despair
Men cast away their not yet dead
Uncared for and uncomforted?
If God please, when the burst tombs quake,
He'll punish them for what they did and spake[8].

Not only does he abhor cruelty to animals in the modern sense of the phrase[9], but he would protect them, if he could, from all injuries which human selfishness causes them to suffer.

(Metre: *Basíṭ.*) ( 320 )

Iniquity is innate: kinswomen taken in ward
Are wronged, and benefits hid, and scales to short measure run.
The thoroughbred horse is lashed, the camel eaten, the ass
A heavy burden must bear, tho' scant the flesh on his bones[10].

[1] I. 360, 13. Cf. I. 59, 6: "Most deserving of mercy in the end are they that show mercy in the beginning."

[2] II. 314, 4. [3] I. 61, 8. [4] I. 65, 2; 238, 11.

[5] II. 3, 3–4; 407, penult.

[6] I. 376, 14–15; II. 31, 5; 279, 6.

[7] See p. 136, *supra*. The poet wonders that men should weep for the death of a child, while every day they slaughter animals or set traps for them (II. 346, 12–14).

[8] II. 74, 12. [9] See No. 313. [10] II. 16, penult.

( 321 )

Equal are a kind mother who gave food to a child in his cradle
and a dove that fed her chick.
Never, then, hasten knife in hand to destroy a young bird that
hopped about in its dwelling-places[1].

( 322 )

Give a drink of water as alms to the birds which go forth at
morning, and deem that they have a better right than men
(to thy charity),
For their race brings not harm upon thee in any wise, when thou
fearest it from thine own race[2].

( 323 )

To let go from my hand a flea that I have caught is a kinder act
than to bestow a dirhem on a man in need.
There is no difference between the black earless creature which I
release and the Black Prince of Kinda who bound the tiara
(on his head)[3].
Both of them take precaution (against death); and life is dear to
it (the flea), and it passionately desires the means of living[4].

The poet speculates concerning the likelihood of a future existence in which innocent animals will enjoy the happiness denied them in this world[5]. Two of the *Luzúmiyyát* are addressed to birds—the ring-dove and the cock[6]—and another to the wolf, who "if he were conscious of his bloodguiltiness, would rather have remained unborn[7]."

As I have shown above, Ma'arrí put no trust in blood and iron as a cure for the woes of humanity[8]. War to his mind is immoral, irrational and futile[9]—for are not the living even

[1] I. 209, penult. Cf. I. 213, 9; II. 105, 1–4.
[2] II. 25, penult.
[3] Al-Jawn (*i.e.* "the black one") was a brother of Ḥárith, the king of Kinda who fell in battle against Mundhir of Ḥíra in A.D. 529. See Sir Charles Lyall's *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, p. 104 foll.
[4] *Luzúm*, I. 212, 9.
[5] I. 261, penult. and foll.; II. 258, last line and foll.
[6] II. 283, 4 and II. 257, 6. [7] II. 284, 12. [8] See p. 103.
[9] *Luzúm*, I. 103, 5; 151, 8; II. 151, 9.

as the dead?—and he wishes that it were physically impossible[1].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 324 )

Reflection perceives that light was brought in the universe
To being: the eternal stuff of Time is its pitchy dark[2].
The empire for which your swords ye brandish, I say to you,
"Desire it no more": of men the miserablest are kings.
And lo, every eventide the sun's horizontal beams
Announce to discerning folk his setting is near at hand[3].

(Metre: *Ṭawíl.*) ( 325 )

The houses are plastered spick and span, while the tombs decay,
Albeit nor gate nor guard can fend off the stroke unseen.
They say that Islam shall be erased, even as of old
The faith Unitarian went forward and Persia fell;
But hap whatsoever may, yet Allah deceaseth not,
And men cull in days to come the fruitage of that they plant.
Methinks, in the last of life is wormwood that made thee then
Forget what thou once wast fed withal by the humming bees.
Aloof from the yellow sun lodge him that the daybeams scorch,
And bid nigh the ruddy flame when icily breathes the night.
O king, sure in Hell's hot fire shall burn he that calls a folk
To prayer the while their blood dyes crimson his scimitar.
In Ramla, the dust-defiled, are striplings and grey-haired men
Sore-stricken with miseries because of the crime thou wrought'st[4].

His views on education are conservative and almost patriarchal.

"Beat thy son and lead him into a right way of action, and do not say, 'He is a child not yet grown up.' A crack on the head is often beneficial: consider how good it is for the reed-pen to have its head split[5]."

[1] I. 61, 7: "Would that the desert, being waterless on every side, were a cutter-off of war!"

[2] Cf. No. 224, fifth couplet. The world is evil by nature, and all the good in it is derived from the light of reason.

[3] *Luzúm*, II. 144; 11.

[4] II. 7, 8.

[5] II. 305, 4; cf. I. 400, 4.

( 326 )

Teach your girls to ply the loom and spindle,
Reading and writing—leave it to their brothers!
A maid's prayer giving unto God the glory
Will serve instead of Yúnus and Bará'a[1].
Well may she blush to sit before the curtain,
Whene'er the singing-women sing behind it[2].

( 327 )

Do not think thy fair ones worthy of praise if they are found
with hands that can form lines of writing,
For it better becomes them to carry spindles than reeds made
into pens.
Girls are arrows: if they get acquainted with a book of grammar,
they return envenomed with mischief.
They leave the virtuous man infatuated, though they came (to
him) as pupils, that he might guide them.
And if they go to consult the astrologer, they do not draw back
from error.
Let them learn to read (the Koran) from an old crone—one of
those who open toothless mouths,
Glorifying the Lord every night and praying in the morning, ever
abstaining from sin.
When young women speak well enough to explain what they
mean, they are not to be blamed for mispronunciation[3].

Such maxims, though widely current, must have been deemed reactionary by many who read the *Luzúm* before the death of its author or soon afterwards[4]. They are based, no doubt, on the general Moslem view that the female sex is "deficient in intelligence and religion." Ma'arrí's ideal of womanhood is the modest, hard-working, home-keeping wife,

1 "Yúnus and Bará'a" refer to two chapters of the Koran, *viz.* the Súra of Yúnus or Jonah (ch. 10) and the Súra of Bará'a (ch. 9), which is so called from the initial word, *bará'a* (immunity). I am indebted to Mr Krenkow for explaining this allusion.

2 *Luzúm*, I. 62, 12.

3 I. 192, 2.

4 See Goldziher's article on Moslem Education in the *Encycl. of religion and ethics*, vol. v. p. 204.

who honours and obeys her husband[1]: she is "thy first Paradise[2]."

( 328 )

(Metre: *Munsariḥ.* Scheme: ⏑–∪–|–∪–∪|–∪∪–.)

A lady wife, praying God to help her to guard
Her husband, 'tis she from shame hath guarded him well.
Up and about early, she betaketh herself
To spin with cotton or sew with needle and thread.
All evil she puts away, afar from her thoughts,
And meets with good in her putting evil afar[3].

The practical moral excellence at which he aims is the result of right knowledge; and right knowledge cannot be gained by means of a liberal education. On the contrary, "people everywhere are called to embrace false doctrines by a party of *udabá*[4]," *i.e.* men of letters and culture. Reason is the guide to virtue, and asceticism is the road. He scorns the argument from antiquity.

Allege not, when thou work'st a deed of shame,
The scoundrel's plea, "My forbears did the same."[5]

Ma'arrí has been dubbed "a precursor of Omar Khayyám[6]," an unfortunate and misleading phrase which can only be defended by the plea that FitzGerald does not give a true picture of the Persian astronomer[7]. Omar, certainly, was a pessimist and sceptic, but (according to FitzGerald) he had also a marked vein of hedonism and mysticism, of which no vestige is to be found in the *Luzúmiyyát*. M. Salmon speaks of "les éloges qu'Al-Ma'arrí, habitué à des fréquentations de buveurs, prodigue à la liqueur vermeille[8]"; these, however, are quite imaginary, for he always refers to wine-drinking with reprobation[9]. Granted that Omar may have

[1] I. 356, 11 foll.; II. 25, 4–5; 418, 7 foll. [2] I. 356, 12.
[3] I. 196, 5. [4] I. 45, 6. [5] II. 98, 4.
[6] G. Salmon, *Le poète aveugle* (Paris, 1904).
[7] See on this point my Introduction to FitzGerald's *Rubá'iyát of Omar Khayyám* (London, 1909), p. 7 foll.
[8] G. Salmon, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
[9] See pp. 167–8, *supra*. By inserting a "not" which does not occur in the original, M. Salmon (p. 66) makes Ma'arrí commend, instead of condemning, the licence given by the Pentateuch.

been more like Ma'arrí than we should suppose from the English representation of him, trustworthy evidence concerning his character is too slight to allow the two poets to be compared. All we can say is that their philosophies of life have some features in common, and that several passages in the *Luzúm* at once call to mind well-known "Omarian" stanzas, for example:

( 329 )

God moulded me of water (seed), and lo, like water I run by measure according as I was set to run.
I was created for the divine purpose without knowing the realities thereof, and would that I were absolved from the reckoning with God!
I see the apparition of a curtain which Destiny pre-ordained, whence I came forth for a little and then was hidden in darkness[1].

Ma'arrí, too, strikes from the calendar

"Unborn To-morrow and dead Yesterday,"

but not in the sense of *carpe diem*; for when he says,

"Lay your hands *now* to that in which we are engaged, and leave alone To-morrow, for it is not yet come, and Yesterday, for it is past[2],"

he warns us that to live righteously is a present and urgent duty. His pessimism is no mood of melancholy retrospect, it is the cry of a man in pain who feels himself driven along ruthlessly, "like victims with halters on their necks[3]."

( 330 )

We were created for some end unclear: we live a little while, then destruction o'ertakes us.
We are like foodless horses, ever champing their bits in wrath, for their side-teeth are bloody with champing[4].

[1] *Luzúm*, I. 160, 9.

[2] I. 353, 17:

خذا الآن فيما نحن فيه وخلّيا * غدًا فهو لم يقدم وأمس فقد مرّا

[3] I. 256, 2; II. 266, 7.

[4] II. 142, 3.

Although, as an ascetic, he must confess and preach the vanity of fame[1], he alludes to his literary reputation and anticipates that it will outlast him.

( 331 )

Well-pleased awhile I gathered lore, till Time
Filled me with rage and memory I did lack.
Whatever I indite in prose or rhyme,
The plagiarists are on my phrases' track[2].

( 332 )

Man's harmony, composed of discords four,
To Seven of diverse influence is made o'er[3].
Read thou my poesy, when earth shall bind me;
For lo, I leave it as an heir behind me[4].

In another passage he tells how he was dreamed of—and in the dreamer's vision he was a great king, his head crowned with a tiara of gold. "I said, interpreting it, 'Gold (*dhahab*) is a sign of my decease (*dhahábí*), and the tiara signifies my renown when I shall be dust.'[5]"

[1] I. 175, 2.
[2] II. 75, last line.
[3] The four elements and the seven planets.
[4] *Luzúm*, II. 98, 11.
[5] II. 38, 5–7.

# APPENDIX

## CONTAINING THE ARABIC TEXT OF THE PIECES TRANSLATED ABOVE

### ABBREVIATIONS

B The Bombay edition of the *Luzúm* (A.H. 1303). It is based on a manuscript dated A.H. 639, which was transcribed for the Ḥafṣite prince, Abú Zakariyyá ibn Abí Ḥafṣ.

C The Cairo edition (A.D. 1891), derived from a manuscript dated A.H. 633.

L A copy, made for Von Kremer, of the Cairo MS. which is the source of the Bombay edition. It is now in the British Museum (Or. 3160, No. 1050 in Rieu's supplementary Catalogue). Von Kremer refers to it as Cod. K (*Zeitschrift d. Deutschen Morg. Gesellschaft*, 38, 501, note 1).

O A manuscript in the Bodleian Library (No. 1293 in Uri's Catalogue). Though it is carelessly written, its original (dated A.H. 517) is more than a century older than the codices used by the Oriental editors.

S The extracts from the *Luzúm* which were published by Von Kremer in the *Sitzungsberichte d. Kais. Akad. zu Wien*, vol. 117 (1889).

Z The texts with German translation published by Von Kremer in the *Zeitschrift d. Deutschen Morg. Gesellschaft*, vols. 29, 30, 31 and 38.

The following text is that of C, collated throughout with BSZ and also, for the greater part, with LO. I have recorded nearly all the variants: it will be seen that these are few and as a rule unimportant. References showing where each extract occurs in C will be found under the English translations.

( I )

الساعُ آنيةُ الحوادثِ ما حَوَت * لم يَبْدُ الّا بعد كشفِ غِطآئِها
وكأنّما هذا الزمانُ قصيدةٌ * ما اضْطُرَّ شاعرُها الى ايطآئِها
ليست لياليهِ مُحِسّةَ كائنٍ * وُصِفَت بسُرْعتِها ولا إبطآئِها

* * *

وسِهامُ دَهْرك لا تزال مُصيبةً * صُرفت بإِذْن الله عن إِخْطآئِها
انّ المَواهب كُلَّها عاريّةٌ * ومن السَّفاهةِ غِبْطةٌ بعَطآئِها

١. Z 30, 44. ٣ C مِحَسّةَ, *i.e.*, Time does not produce events in the same way as a currycomb brings out dust.

(2)

ولیت ولیدًا مات ساعةَ وَضْعهِ * ولم یَرتضعْ من أُمّهِ النَّفَسآءِ
یقول لها من قَبْل نُطْق لسانهِ * تُفیدینَ بی أن تُنْکَبی وتُسائی

(3)

أَصاحِ هی الدنیا تُشابهُ مَیْتةً * ونحن حَوالَیْها الکلابُ النَّوابِحُ
فمن ظلَّ منها آکلًا فهو خاسرٌ * ومن عاد عنها ساغبًا فهو رابِحُ
ومن لم تُبَیِّتْهُ الخُطوبُ فانّه * سیَصْبَحُهُ من حادثِ الدهر صابِحُ

(4)

هی النَّفْسُ عَنّاها من الدهر فاجِعُ * برُزءٍ وغَنّاها لتَطْرَبَ ساجِعُ
ولم تَدْرِ من أَنَّی تُعَدُّ لنا الخُطَی * ولا أَیْنَ تُقْضَی للجُنوبِ المضاجِعُ
وما هذه الساعاتُ إلّا اراقمٌ * وما شُجِعتْ فی لَمْسهنّ الاشاجِعُ
أَری الناسَ انفاسَ التُّراب فظاهرٌ * الینا ومردودٌ الی الارض راجِعُ
شربتُ سِنیَّ الاربعین تجرّعًا * فیا مَقرًا ما شُرْبُهُ فیَّ ناجِعُ
جَهِلْنا فحَیٌّ فی الضلالة میّتٌ * اخو سَکْرةٍ فی غَیّهِ لا یُراجِعُ

(5)

تَقِفون والفَلَکُ المسخَّرُ دائرٌ * وتُقدِّرون فتَضْحَکُ الأَقْدارُ

(6)

تنادَوْا ظاعنین غداةَ قالوا * اصاب الارضَ من مَطَرٍ مُصیبُ
لعلّ شوائمًا رمقتْ ومیضًا * تَبیدُ وما لها فیه نَصیبُ
وقد تنجو النفوسُ بأَرض جَدْبٍ * ویُهلك اهلَهُ المَغْنَی الخَصیبُ

4. ٢ BL تَعُدُّ. ٣ O وان شجعت. 6. Z 30, 50.

(7)

قضى اللهُ أنّ الآدمىَّ معذَّبٌ * الى أن يقولَ العالِمون به قَضَى
فهنّئْ وُلاةَ المَيْت يومَ رحيلهِ * اصابوا تُراثًا وٱستراح الذى مَضَى

(8)

أَجَلُّ هِبات الدهر تَرْكُ المواهِبِ * يَمُدُّ لما أَعْطاك راحةَ ناهِبِ
وأَفضلُ من عيش الغِنَى عيشُ فاقةٍ * ومن زىّ مَلْكٍ رائقٍ زىُّ راهِبِ
وما خِلْتُهُ إلّا سيَبْعثُ حادثًا * يحُلّ الثُّريّا عن جبين الغَياهِبِ
جَلا فَرْقَدَيْهِ قَبْلَ نُوحٍ وآدمٍ * الى اليوم لمّا يُدْعَيَا فى القَراهِبِ
٥ ولى مَذْهَبٌ فى هَجْرِىَ الإنسَ نافعٌ * اذا القوم خاضوا فى ٱختيار المَذاهِبِ
أَرانا على الساعات فُرسانَ غارةٍ * وهنّ بنا يَجرينَ جَرْىَ السَّلاهِبِ
وممّا يزيدُ العيشَ إخلاقَ مَلْبَسٍ * تأَسُّفُ نَفْسٍ لم تُطِقْ ردَّ ذاهِبِ

(9)

مَلِلْتُ عيشى فعُوجى يا منيّةُ بى * وذُقْتُ فنَّيْهِ من بُؤْسٍ ومن رَغَدِ
غدى سيوجَدُ أَمْسى لا ينازعنى * فى ذاك خَلْقٌ وأمسى لا يصير غَدى

(10)

لا كانت الدنيا فليس يَسُرّنى * أَنّى خليفتُها ولا مَحْمودُها
وجهلتُ امرى غيرَ أنّى سالكٌ * طُرُقًا وَخَتْها عادُها وثَمودُها
زعموا بأنّ الهَضْب سوف يُذيبُهُ * قَدَرٌ ويَحْدُثُ للبِحار جُمودُها
وتشاجروا فى قُبّة الفَلَك التى * ما زال يَعْظُمُ فى النفوس عَمودُها
٥ فيقول ناسٌ سوف يُدركها الرَّدَى * ويَمينُ قومٍ لا يَجوزُ هُمودُها
أَتُدالُ يومًا فِضّةٌ من فِضّةٍ * فيصيرَ مثلَ سبيكة جُلْمودُها
إن فَرّقتْ شُهْبَ الثُّريّا نَكْبةٌ * فلجِذْوةِ المِرّيخ حُقَّ خُمودُها
واذا سيوفُ الهِنْدِ أَدركها البِلَى * فمن العجائبِ أن تدومَ غُمودُها

7. ١ BCLO به قضا. ٢ O تهنّى. BLO مضا.
8. ٥ O هجرتى. O اختبار.

( II )

ايا طِفْلَ الشفيقة إنّ ربّى * على ما شآء من امرٍ مُقيتُ
تَكَلَّمُ بَعْدَ موتك بآعتبارٍ * وقد أَوْدَى بك النَّبَأُ المَقيتُ
تقول حَللتُ عاجلتى بكرْهى * فعِشْتُ وكم لُددتُ وكم سُقيتُ
رَقِيتُ الحولَ شهرًا بعد شهرٍ * فلَيْتى فى الأهِلّة ما رَقيتُ
فلمّا صيح بى ودَنا فِطامى * تيمّمنى الحِمامُ فما وُقيتُ
تركتُ الدار خاليةً لغيرى * ولو طال المُقامُ بها شَقيتُ
نَقِيتُ فما دَنِسْتُ ولو تمادتْ * حياةٌ بى دنستُ فما نَقيتُ
وما يُدْريكِ باكيتى عَسانى * لسُكْنَى الفَوْز فى الأُخْرَى آنْتُقيتُ
رَقَتْنى الراقياتُ وحُمَّ يومى * فغادرنى كأنّى ما رُقيتُ
هَبينى عشتُ عُمْرَ النَّسْر فيها * وكان الموتُ آخِرَ ما لَقيتُ
فقيرًا فآستُضِمْتُ بلا آتّقآءٍ * لربّى او اميرًا فآتّقيتُ
ومن صُنْعِ المليكِ الىَّ أنّى * تعجَّلتُ الرحيلَ فما بَقيتُ

( I2 )

أَرى اللُّبَّ مِرْآةَ اللبيب ومن يكن * مَرآئِيَهُ الإخْوانُ يُصْدَقْ ويُكْذَبِ
أَأَخشَى عذابَ الله واللهُ عادلٌ * وقد عشتُ عيش المستضام المعذَّبِ
نَعَمْ إنّها الأرزاقُ والمرءُ جاهلٌ * يُهذِّبُ من دنياهُ ما لم يُهَذَّبِ

( I3 )

ما بآختيارىَ ميلادى ولا هَرَمى * ولا حياتى فهَلْ لى بَعْدُ تَخْييرُ
ولا إقامةَ إلّا عن يدَىْ قَدَرٍ * ولا مَسيرَ اذا لم يُقْضَ تَسْييرُ
زعمتَ أنّك تَهدينى لواضحةٍ * كَذبتَ هذا الذى تَحْكيهِ تَحْييرُ
عَيّرتَ أمرًا فهل غَيّرتَ مُنْكَرَهُ * ام ليس عندك للنَّكراءِ تَغْييرُ

11. ٩ BC وحَمَّ.

( 14 )

وسِرْتُ عُمرى الى قَبرى على مَهَلٍ * وقد دنوتُ فحُقَّ الخَوْفُ والهَلَعُ
ما نحن أَمْ ما برايا عالَمٍ كُثُرٍ * فى قُدرة بعضُها الافلاكَ يبتَلِعُ
تهزَّمَ الرعدُ حتّى خِلْتُهُ أَسَدًا * أَمامَهُ من بُروقٍ أَلْسُنٌ دُلُعُ

( 15 )

من قِلّةِ اللُّبّ عند النُّصْح أن تأْبَى * وأن ترومَ من الايّام إِعْتابا
خَلِّ الزمانَ وأَهليهِ لِشأنِهِمُ * وعِشْ بدَهْرك والأَقوامِ مُرْتابا
سار الشبابُ فلم نَعْرف له خَبَرًا * ولا رأينا خَيالًا منه مُنْتابا
وحُقَّ للعِيس لو نالت بنا بَلَدًا * فيه الصِّبا كَوْنُ عُودِ الهِنْدِ أَقْتابا
أَلْقَى الكبيرُ قميصَ الشَّرْخ رَهْنَ بِلًى * ثمّ ٱستجدَّ قميصَ الشَّيْب مُجْتابا
ما زال يَمْطُلُ دنياه بتَوْبته * حتّى أَتتْهُ منایاها وما تابا
خَطُّ ٱستواءٍ بدا عن نُقْطةٍ عَجَبٍ * أَفْنَتْ خُطوطًا وأَقلامًا وكُتّابا

( 16 )

ما أَجْهَلَ الأُمَمَ الذين عَرفتُهم * ولعلّ سالِفَهم أَضَلُّ وأَتْبَرُ
يَدعُون فى جُمعاتهم بسفاهةٍ * لأميرهم فيكادُ يبكى المِنْبَرُ
جئنا على كُرْهٍ ونَرْحَلُ رُغْمًا * ولعلّنا ما بين ذلك نُجْبَرُ
ما قيل فى عِظَم المليك وعِزّه * فاللهُ أَعْظَمُ فى القياس وأَكْبَرُ
وكأنّما دنياك رُؤيا نائمٍ * بالعكس فى عُقْبَى الزمانِ تُعَبَّرُ
فاذا بكيتَ بها فتلك مَسَرّةٌ * واذا ضَحِكْتَ فذاك عَيْنٌ تَعْبَرُ
سُرَّ الفتى من جَهْلِهِ بزمانه * وهو الأَسيرُ ليَوْمِ قَتْلٍ يُصْبَرُ

14. ٣ O أُسْدًا امامها.
15. ٦ L in marg. منایاه.

( 17 )

لا يَمنعُ المَلِكَ الجبّارَ من قَدَرٍ * يُغيّرُ الحالَ ما أَجْدَى وما جاسا
ولو غدا الكوكبُ المِرّيخُ فى يده * كالسهم واتّخَذَ البِرْجِيسَ بِرْجاسا

( 18 )

فبُعْدًا لهذا الجسم يا روحُ مَسْلَكًا * وبعدًا لهذى الروح يا جسمُ سالِكا
تواصلتُما فاستحدثَ الوصلُ منكما * عجائبَ كانت للرجال مَهالِكا

( 19 )

أَتَرْجِعُ نَفْسُ الميْت بعدَ رحيلِهِ * فيجزىَ قومًا بالدُّموع السَّواكِبِ
تَبَدَّلَ أَعناقَ الرجال وأَيديًا * تَناقَلُهُ من عَسْجَدىّ المَراكِبِ
أَحَبُّ اليه كَوْنُهُ متواطئًا * بأَقدامهم لا الحَمْلُ فوق المَناكِبِ
هو الموتُ مُثْرٍ عنده مثلُ مُقْتِرٍ * وقاصدُ نَهْج مثلُ آخَرَ ناكِبِ
ودِرْعُ الفتى فى حُكْمه دِرْعُ غادةٍ * وأبياتُ كِسْرَى من بُيوت العَناكِبِ
فرُجِّلَ فى غَبراءَ والخَطْبُ فارسٌ * وما زال فى الأهلين أَشْرَفَ راكِبِ
وما النعشُ إلّا كالسفينة راميًا * بغَرْقاهُ فى مَوْج الرَّدَى المُتَراكِبِ

( 20 )

فيا سِرْ بى لتُدْرِكَنا المنايا * ونحن على السجيّة أَصْدِقاءُ
أَرى جَرْعَ الحياةِ أَمَرَّ شىءٍ * فشاهِدْ صِدْقَ ذلك اذ تُقاءُ

( 21 )

كأنّما الارضُ شاعَ فيها * من طيبِ أَزهارها بَخورُ
أَثْنَتْ على ربّها السَّوارى * والنبْتُ والماءُ والصُّخورُ
ونحن فوق التراب ثِقْلٌ * يكاد مِن تحتنا يخور

19. ٢ C تَنَاقُلُهُ. 20. ١ BLO فياسرنى. 21. ٢ C السوادى.

( 22 )

أَوصيتُ نفسى وعن وُدٍّ نَصحتُ لها * فما أَجابت الى نُصْحى وإيصآئى
والرَّمْلُ يُشبِهُ فى أَعداده خَطَأى * فما أَهُمَّ له يومًا بإحصآءِ
والرِزقُ يأتى ولم تُبْسَطْ اليه يدى * سِيّانِ فى ذاك إدنآئى وإقْصآئى
لو أنّه فى الثُّريّا والسِماكِ أوِ الـ * ـشِّعْرَى العَبورِ أوِ الشِّعْرَى الغُمَيْصآءِ

( 23 )

نَقْضى الحياةَ ولم يُفْصَدْ لشاربنا * دَنٌّ ولا عَوْدُنا فى الجَدْب مَفْصودُ
نُفارق العيش لم نَظفَر بمعرفةٍ * ايُّ المعانى بأهل الارضِ مَقْصودُ
لم تُعْطِنا العلمَ اخبارٌ يجىء بها * نَقْلٌ ولا كوكبٌ فى الارض مَرْصودُ
وآبْيَضَّ ما آخْضَرَّ من نَبْتِ الزمانِ بنا * وكلُّ زرعٍ اذا ما هاج مَحْصودُ

( 24 )

فُقِدَتْ فى ايّامك العُلَمآءُ * وآدلهمّت عليهمُ الظَّلْمآءُ
وتَغَشَّى دَهْمآءنا الغىُّ لمّا * عُطِّلَتْ من وُضوحها الدَّهْمآءُ
للمليك المذكَّراتُ عَبيدٌ * وكذاك المؤَنَّثاتُ إمآءُ
فالهلالُ المُنيفُ والبدرُ والفَرْقَدُ والصُّبْحُ والثَّرَى والمآءُ
والثُّريّا والشمسُ والنارُ والنَّشْـ * ـرةُ والارضُ والضُّحَى والسمآءُ
هذه كلُّها لِربّك ما عابك فى قول ذلك الحُكَمآءُ
خَلِّنى يا أُخَىَّ أَسْتَغْفِرِ اللـ * ـهَ فلم يَبْقَ فىَّ إلّا الذِّمآءُ
ويقال الكرامُ قولًا وما فى الـ * ـعَصْر إلّا الشُّخوصُ والأَسمآءُ
وأحاديثُ خبَّرتْها غُواةٌ * وآفترتْها للمَكْسَب القُدَمآءُ
هذه الشُّهْبُ خِلتُها شَبَكَ الدَّهْـ * ـرِ لها فوق أهلها إلْمآءُ

23. ٣٥ فى الافق مرصود.

عَجَبًا للقَضآءِ تَمَّ على الخلـــــقِ فهمّت أن تُبْسِلَ الحُزَمآءِ
أَوَما يُبْصرون فِعْلَ الردى كيـــــفَ يبيدُ الأصهارُ والأَحْمآءِ
غَلَبَ المينُ منذ كان على الخَلْـــــقِ وماتت بغَيْظها الحُكَمآءِ
فآرقُبى يا عَصْمآءُ يومًا ولو أَنَّكِ فى رأس شاهقٍ عَصْمآءِ
وأرى الأَرْبَعَ الغرائزَ فينا * وهى فى جُثّة الفتى خُصَمآءِ
ان توافقنَ صحَّ او لا فما ينـــــفَكُّ عنها الإمراض والإِغْمآءِ
ووجدتُ الزمان أَعْجَمَ فَظًّا * وجُبارٌ فى حُكمها العَجْمآءِ
انّ دنياك من نهارٍ وليلٍ * وهى فى ذاك حَيّةٌ عَرْمآءِ

(25)

لو كنتُ رائدَ قوم ظاعنين الى * دنياك هذى لَما أُلفيتُ كَذّابا
لقلتُ تلك بلادٌ نَبْتُها سَقَمٌ * ومآؤُها العَذْبُ سَمٌّ للفتى ذابا
هى العذابُ فجِدّوا فى ترحُّلكم * الى سِواها وخَلُّوا الدارَ إِعْذابا
وما تهذَّب يومٌ من مكارهها * او بعضُ يومٍ فحُثّوا السَّيْرَ إِهْذابا
خبَّرتُكم بيقينٍ غيرِ مُؤتشِبٍ * ولم اكن فى حِبال المَيْن جَذّابا

(26)

أُمورٌ تَستخفُّ بها حُلومْ * وما يَدرى الفتى لِمَن الثُّبُورْ
كتابُ محمَّدٍ وكتاب موسى * وإِنجيل آبن مَرْيَمَ والزَّبُورْ
نَهَتْ أُمَمًا فما قَبِلَت وبارت * نصيحتُها فكلُّ القوم بُورْ
ودارا ساكنٍ وحياةُ قومٍ * كجِسْر فوقه آتَّصل العُبُورْ
يعطَّل مَنْزِلٌ ويُزار قبرٌ * وما تَبقى الديارُ ولا القُبُورْ

24. ١١ O تنسل. ١٧ O حكمنا.
25. ١ BCL كنتَ. BCL الفيتَ. ٢ BCL لقلتَ.

( 27 )

اذا ما آستهلَّ الطفلُ قال وُلاته * وإن صمتوا عانِ الخُطوبَ ورَشْقَها
شَقِينا بدُنيانا على طول وُدّها * فدونَك مارِسْها حياتَك وآشْقَها
ولا تُظهِرنَّ الزُّهْدَ فيها فكلُّنا * شهيدٌ بأنّ القلب يُضْمِرُ عِشْقَها

( 28 )

لقد مرَّ حَرْسٌ بعد حرسٍ جميعُهُ * حَنادسُ لم يَذْرُرْ مع الصُّبح شارِقُهْ
تغيَّرت الاشياءُ والمُلكُ ثابتٌ * مَغارِبُهُ موفورةٌ ومَشارِقُهْ
مُرادٌ جَرَتْ أَقلامُهُ فتبادرت * بأمرٍ وجَفّت بالقضاءِ مَهارِقُهْ
وهل أَفْلَتَ الأَيّامَ كِسْرَى وحَوْلَهُ * مَرازِبُهُ او قَيْصَرٌ وبَطارِقُهْ

( 29 )

ظَمِئْتَ الى ماءِ الشبابِ ولم يزل * يغورُ على طول المَدَى ويَغيضُ
تراهُ مع الإخوانِ لا تستطيعُهُ * حبيبٌ متى يَبْعُدْ فأنت بَغيضُ

( 30 )

لعلّ نُجوم الليل تُعْمِلُ فِكْرَها * لتُعْلِمَ سِرًّا فالعيونُ شواهِدُ
خَرجتُ الى ذى الدار كرْهًا ورِحْلتى * الى غيرها بالرَّغْم واللهُ شاهِدُ
فهل أَنا فيما بين ذَيْنِكَ مُجْبَرٌ * على عَمَلٍ ام مستطيعٌ فجاهِدُ
عَدِمْتُكِ يا دنيا فأَهْلُكِ أَجمعوا * على الجهل طاغٍ مُسْلِمٌ ومُعاهِدُ
٥ فمفتضِحٌ يُبدى ضمائرَ صدْره * ومُخْفٍ ضميرَ النَّفْس فهو مُجاهِدُ
اخو شَيْبةٍ طفلُ المُرادِ وهِمّةٌ * لها هِمّةٌ فى العيش عَذْراءُ ناهِدُ
فوا عجبا نقفو احاديثَ كاذبٍ * ونترُك من جهْلٍ بنا ما نُشاهِدُ
لقد ضلّ هذا للخلقُ ما كان فيهمُ * ولا كائنٌ حتّى القيامةِ زاهِدُ

30. ١ BL لتَعْلَمَ.

29. ١ BCL ظمئتُ.

(31)

كَفَى حَزَنًا أنّ الفتى بعد سَوْمِهِ * تقول له الايّامُ فى جَدَثٍ لِجِ
وكم وَطِئَتْ أَقدامُنا فى تُرابها * جبينَ اخى كِبْرٍ وهامةَ أَبْلَجِ

(32)

من أَحْسَنِ الدهر وقتًا ساعةٌ سَلِمَتْ * من الشُّرور وفيها صاحبٌ حَدُثُ
أَعْجِبْ بدَهْرك أُولاهُ وآخِرِهِ * إنّ الزمان قديمٌ سِنُّهُ حَدَثُ
أَوْدَى رَداهُ بأَجيالٍ فكم حُفِرَتْ * اجداثُ قومٍ ولم يُحْفَرْ له جَدَثُ

(33)

يُؤمِّل كلُّ أن يعيشَ وانّما * تُمارسُ أَهوالَ الزمان اذا عِشْتا
اذا آفتَرقتْ أَجزآءُ جسمىَ لم أُبَلْ * حُلولَ الرزايا فى مَصيف ولا مَشْتا
فرِشْ مُعْدِمًا إن كان يُمْكِنُ رَيْشُهُ * ولا تَفخَرنْ بين الانام بما رِشْتا
وان فِضْتَ للأَقوام بالمال والغِنَى * فيا بحرُ أَيقِنْ بالنُّضوب وإن جِشْتا

(34)

أَهْلًا بغائلة الردى وإيابِها * كيما تُستِّرَنى بفَضْلِ ثِيابِها
دُنياك دارٌ إن يكن شُهّادُها * عُقلآءَ لا يبكوا على غُيّابِها
قد أَظهرتْ نُوَبًا تَزيدُ على الحَصَى * عَدَدًا وكم فى ضِبْنها وعِيابِها
تَفريهمُ بسُيوفها وتُكُبُّهم * برِماحها وتنالُهم بصِيابِها
٥ ما الظافرون بعِزّها ويسارِها * إلّا قريبو الحالِ من خُيّابِها

* * *

ومن العجائب أنّ كلًّا راغبٌ * فى أُمِّ دَفْرٍ وهو من عُيّابِها

34. ٤ L تُقْريهم.

( 35 )

بنى الدهرِ مَهْلًا إن ذممتُ فِعالكم * فانّى بنفسى لا محالةَ أَبْدَأُ
متى يتقضّى الوقتُ واللهُ قادرٌ * فنَسْكُنُ فى هذا التراب ونَهْدَأُ
تجاورَ هذا الجسمُ والروحُ بُرْهةً * فما بَرِحَتْ تأذَى بذاك وتَصْدَأُ

( 36 )

انّ الأَعِلّآءَ إن كانوا ذوى رَشَدٍ * بما يُعانُون من داءٍ أَطِبّآءُ
وما شَفاكَ من الأَشياءِ تطْلُبُها * إلّا الأَلِبّآءُ لو تُلْفَى الأَلِبّآءُ
نَفِرُّ من شُرْبِ كأسٍ وهى تَتْبعنا * كأنّنا لمنايانا أَحِبّآءُ

( 37 )

قد يسّروا لدفينٍ حان مَصْرَعُهُ * بيتًا من الخُشْب لم يُرْفَعْ ولا رَحُبا
يا هٰؤلاءِ آتركوه والثَّرَى فلهُ * أُنسٌ به وهو أَوْلَى صاحبٍ صُحِبا
وانّما الجسم تُرْبٌ خيرُ حالتهِ * سُقْيا الغمائم فآستسقوا له السُّحُبا
صار البهيجُ من الأقوام خَطَّ سَفًى * وقد يُراعُ اذا ما وجهُهُ شَحَبا
سيّانِ من لم يَضِقْ ذَرْعًا بُعَيدَ رَدًى * وذارعٌ فى مَغانى فِتْيةٍ سُحِبا
فآفرَقْ من الضحْك وآحذَرْ أن تُحالِفَهُ * أما ترى الغَيْمَ لمّا آستُضحِكَ آنتَحَبا

( 38 )

أَشْباحُ إنسٍ يَخضِبون صوارمًا * تحت العَجاجِ ويركُضون الشُّسَّبا
ويُمارِسون من الظَّلام غَياهِبًا * ويُواصِلون فيَقْطعون السَّبْسَبا
ومُرادُهم عَذْبٌ خسيسٌ قَدْرُهُ * شربوا له مَقِرًا لكيما يُلْسَبا

* * *

روحٌ اذا رَحلتْ عن الجسم الذى * سكنتْ به فمآلُهُ أن يَرْسُبا

( 39 )

قبيحٌ أن يُحَسَّ نحيبُ باكٍ * اذا حان الردى فقضَيْتُ نَحْبى
ولم أُرِدِ المنيّةَ بٱختيارى * ولكن أَوْشَكَ الفَتَيانِ سَحْبى
ولو خُيّرتُ لم أَتْرُكْ مَحَلّى * فأَسكُنَ فى مَضيق بعد رُحْبِ
وجدتُ الموتَ ينتظمُ البرايا * بسُحب منه فى أَعقاب سُحْبِ
فأُوصيكم بدنيانا هَوانًا * فانّى تابعٌ آثارَ صَحْبى

( 40 )

ان يَقْرُبِ الموتُ منّى * فلستُ أَكْرَهُ قُرْبَهْ
وذاك أَمْنَعُ حِصْنٍ * يُصَيِّرُ القبرُ دَرْبَهْ
من يَلْقَهُ لا يُراقِبْ * خَطْبًا ولا يَخْشَ كُرْبَهْ
كأنّنى رَبُّ إِبْلٍ * أَضْحَى يُمارِسُ جُرْبَهْ
او ناشطٌ يتبغَّى * فى مَقْفَر الارضِ عِرْبَهْ
وإن رُددتُ لأَصْلى * دُفنتُ فى شرّ تُرْبَهْ
والوقتُ ما مرَّ إلّا * وحَلَّ فى العُمر أُرْبَهْ
كُلٌّ يحاذر حَتْفًا * وليس يَعْدَمُ شُرْبَهْ
ويَتّقى الصارمَ العَضْـ * ـبَ أن يُباشِرَ غَرْبَهْ
والنَّزْعُ فوق فِراشٍ * أَشَقُّ من أَلْف ضَرْبَهْ
والسُّبُّ حارَبَ فينا * طبعًا يُكابِدُ حَرْبَهْ
يا ساكنَ اللحْدِ عَرِّفْـ * ـنى الحِمامَ وإِرْبَهْ
ولا تَضَنّ فانّى * ما لى بذلك دُرْبَهْ

40. ٢ BCLO يُصَيِّرُ القبرَ. ٥ BL مُقْفِر.

يُكُرُّ فى الناس كالأَجْـ * ـدَل المُعاوِدِ سِرْبَهْ
او كالمُغير من العاسلاتِ يَطْرُقُ زَرْبَهْ
لا ذاتَ سَرْبٍ يُعرِّى الـ * ـرَّدَى ولا ذاتَ سُرْبَهْ
وما أَظُنُّ المنايا * تخطو كواكبَ جِرْبَهْ
ستأخُذُ النَّسْرَ والغَـ * ـرَ والسِماكَ وتِرْبَهْ
فَتَّشْنَ عن كلّ نفْسٍ * شَرْقَ الفَضاءِ وغَرْبَهْ
وزُرْنَ عن غير بِرٍّ * عُجْمَ الأَنامِ وعُرْبَهْ
ما وَمْضةٌ من عقيقٍ * إلّا تُهيّجُ طَرْبَهْ
هَوًى تعبَّدَ حُرًّا * فما يُحاول هَرْبَهْ
من رامنى لم يَجِدْنى * إنّ المَنازل غَرْبَهْ
كانت مَفارِقُ جُونٌ * كأنّها رِيشُ غِرْبَهْ
ثمّ آنجلتْ فعَجِبْنا * للقار بُدِّلَ صَرْبَهْ
اذا خَمِصْتُ قليلًا * عَددتُ ذلك قُرْبَهْ
وليس عندىَ من آلة السُّرَى غيرُ قِرْبَهْ

( 41 )

اذا لم يكن خَلْفى كبيرٌ يُضيعُهُ * حِمامى ولا طفلٌ ففيمَ حَياتى
وما العيشُ إلّا عِلّةٌ بُرءُها الرَّدَى * فخَلِّى سبيلى أَنْصَرِفْ لطِياتى

( 42 )

خيرٌ لآدَمَ والخَلْقِ الذى خرجوا * من ظَهْره أن يكونوا قبلُ ما خُلِقُوا
فهل أَحَسَّ وبالى جسمِهِ رِمَمٌ * بما رآهُ بَنُوهُ من أَذًى ولَقُوا
وما تُريدُ بدارٍ لستَ مالكَها * تُقيم فيها قليلًا ثمّ تَنْطَلِقُ
فارقتَها غيرَ محمودٍ على سَخَطٍ * وفى ضميرك من وَجْدٍ بها عَلَقُ

* * *

جونًا O ٢٤ . ذات سِرْب L ١٦ . كالمُعير B . كالمعير C ١٠ 40

٥ تكون للروح ثَوْبًا ثمّ يَخْلعه * والثوبُ يَنْهَجُ حتّى الدِّرْعُ والحَلَقُ
وأَخلقتْهُ الليالى فى تجدّدها * والغَدْرُ منهنّ فى إِخلاقه خُلُقُ
والناسُ شَتَّى فيُعْطَى المَقْتَ صادِقُهم * عن الأُمور ويُحْبَى الكاذبُ المَلِقُ
يغدو الى المَيْن من قلّت دَراهِمُهُ * فيَجْمع المالَ ما يُفْرى ويَخْتَلِقُ
وربّما عَذَلَ الانسانُ مُهْجتَهُ * فى الصِدق حينَ يرى جَدَّ الذى يَلِقُ

(43)

دنياك تُكْنَى بأُمّ دَفْرٍ * لم يَكْنِها الناسُ أُمَّ طيبِ
فأْذَنْ الى هاتفٍ مُجيدٍ * قام على غُصْنه الرَّطيبِ
يكون عند اللبيب منّا * أَبْلَغَ من واعظٍ خَطيبِ
يَحْلِفُ ما جادتِ الليالى * الّا بسَمٍّ لنا قَطيبِ

(44)

أُوَدِّعُ يومى عالمًا أنّ مثْلَهُ * اذا مرَّ عن مثلى فليس يَعودُ
وما غَفَلات العيش الّا مَناحسٌ * وإِن ظَنَّ قومٌ أنّهنّ سُعودُ
كأنّى على العَوْد الرَّكوب مُهَجّرًا * اذا نَصّ حِرْبآءَ الظهيرةِ عُودُ
سَرَى الموتُ فى الظَّلْماآء والقومُ فى الكَرَى * وقام على ساقٍ ونحن قعود

(45)

أَكُمْهًا ليس بينهُمْ بصيرٌ * أَما لكُمُ الى العَلْياآء هادى
عَمَرْنا الدهر شُبّانًا وشِيبًا * فبُؤسٌ للرُّقاد وللسُّهادِ
وأَوْطنّا الديارَ بكلّ وقتٍ * فألفينا الروابىَ كالوِهادِ
يمهَّد للغنىّ فِراشُ نوم * وقبرٌ كان أَرْوَحَ من مِهادِ
٥ اذا آقترنت بجسم الحىّ روحٌ * فتلك وذاك فى حالَىْ جِهادِ

42. ٨ BL يَفْرى.

44. ٣ O نضّ.

( 46 )

ولا مَقَرَّ على اللذّات اوّلُها * شَهْدٌ يغُرُّ ولكن غِبُّها مَقِرُ
آلَى الزمانُ يقينًا أن سيَجْمَعُنا * الى التراب ورُسْلُ الموت تَنْتَقِرُ
يَغْنَى الفتى بالمنايا عن مآربِهِ * ويُنْفَخُ الروحُ فى طفل فيَفْتَقِرُ

( 47 )

لَوِ آتّبعونى وَيْحَهم لهدَيتُهم * الى الحقّ او نَهْجٍ لذاك مُقارِبِ
فقد عشتُ حتّى ملّنى ومَلِلْتُهُ * زمانى وناجتْنى عُيونُ التَّجارِبِ
* * *
فما للفتى إلّا آنفرادٌ ووَحْدةٌ * اذا هو لم يُرْزَقْ بُلوغَ المآرِبِ
فحارِبْ وسالِمْ إن اردتَ فانّما * اخو السِّلْم فى الايّام مثلُ المُحارب

( 48 )

حوائجُ نفْسى كالغَوانى قصائرٌ * وحاجاتُ غيرى كالنِّساءِ الرَّدائدِ
اذا أَغْضَبَ الخيلَ الشكيمُ فما لها * عليه اقتدارٌ غير أَزْمِ الحَدائدِ
وما يسبَحُ الإنسانُ فى لُجّ غَمْرةٍ * من العزّ إلّا بعدَ خَوْض الشَّدائدِ
وما كَفَّ عقلى أن يُؤمِّلَ بائدًا * من الأمر أَنّى بائدٌ وآبنُ بائدِ
أَحيدُ فتُشْوينى السهامُ ولو رَمَتْ * قِسىُّ حِمامى لم تجدْنى بحائدِ
تُذادُ عن الحَوْض الغرائبُ ضِنّةً * وحوضُ الردى ما دونه كَفُّ ذائدِ
لَعَمْرُك ما شامَ الغمائمَ شائمى * ولا طَلَبَ الرَّوْضَ السَّحابىَّ رائدى
وكيف أُرجّى من زمان زيادةً * وقد حَذَفَ الأَصْلىَّ حَذْفَ الزَّوائدِ

( 49 )

قد ساءَها العُقْمُ لا ضَمّتْ ولا وَلَدَت * وذاك خيرٌ لها لو أُعْطِيَتْ رَشَدا
ما يأخذ الموتُ من نفْسٍ لمنفرِدٍ * شيئًا سِواها اذا ما آغتال وآحْتَشَدا
ومُنْشِدُ الخير لا تُصْغى له أُذُنٌ * قد ضلّ مذ كانت الدنيا فما نُشِدا

غيوب التجارب ٥ ٢ .47

( 50 )

تَداولنى صُبْحٌ ومُسْىٌ وحِنْدِسٌ * ومرَّ علىَّ اليومُ والغَدُ والأَمْسُ
يُضىءُ نهارٌ ثمّ يُخْدِرُ مُظْلِمٌ * ويَطلع بدرٌ ثمّ تَعْقِبه شَمْسُ
أَسيرُ عن الدنيا وما انا ذاكرٌ * لها بسلامٍ إنَّ أَحْداثها حُمْسُ
صَرورةَ ما حالَيْنِ ما لِكعابها * ولا الرُكنِ تقبيلٌ لَدَىَّ ولا لَمْسُ

* * *

٥ لَعَمْرى لقد جاوزتُ خمسين حِجّةً * وحَسْبىَ عَشْرٌ فى الشدائد او خَمْسُ
وإن ذهبتْ كالفَيْء فهى كمَغْنَمٍ * يُحازُ ولم يُفْرَزْ لخالقِهِ الخُمْسُ
فللخَبَلِ المِرْوَى وللعالَم القِلَى * وللجَسَد المَثْوَى وللأَثَر الطَّمْسُ
بَدارِ بَدارِ الخيرَ يا قلبُ تائبًا * أَلستَ بِدارٍ أنّ منزلىَ الرَّمْسُ
وأَجْهَرُ حينًا ثمّ أَهْمِسُ تارةً * وسيّانِ عند الواحد الجَهْرُ والهَمْسُ
١٠ وأَقْمُسُ فى لُجّ النوائب طالبًا * ويُغْرقنى مِنْ دونِ لُؤلُؤهِ القَمْسُ

( 51 )

حياةُ عَناءٌ وموتٌ عَنا * فليت بَعيدَ حِمامٍ دَنا
يدٌ صَفرَتْ ولَهاةٌ ذَوَتْ * ونفْسٌ تمنّتْ وطَرْفٌ رَنا
ومُوقِدُ نيرانهِ فى الدُّجَى * يرومُ سَناءً برَفْع السَّنا
يُحاوِل من عاش سِتْرَ القميصِ * ومِلْءَ الخَميصِ وبُرْءَ الضَّنَى
٥ ومن ضَمَّهُ جَدَثٌ لم يُبَلْ * على ما أَفادَ ولا ما اقْتَنَى
يَصير ترابًا سَواءً عليـ * ـهِ مَسُّ الحَريرِ وطَعْنُ القَنا

* * *

50 ٦ L in marg. يُفْرَدْ. ٧ BCLO فللخبر المروى, *i.e.*, المُرْوَى, "the tradition must be recited and learned by heart in order to be communicated orally to others." This reading, however, seems to me less appropriate than the emendation printed above. ٨ B يا قلب.

51. ١ O وموت غِنا. ٢ BL تنمّت. ٤ BL سَتْرَ.

يُهَنَّأُ بالخير من نالَهُ * وليس الهَناءُ على ما هُنا
وأَقْرِبْ لمن كان فى غِبْطة * بلقْيا المُنَى من لِقاءِ المَنا

(52)

اذا غيّبونى لم أُبالِ متى هفا * نسيمُ شَمالٍ او نسيمُ جَنُوبِ
تنوبُ الرزايا أَعْظُمى لا أَصونُها * بمُتَّخَذٍ من عَرْعَرٍ وتَنُوبِ
فهل عاينوا فى مَضْجعى لجرائرى * كتائبَ من زَنْجٍ تَروعُ ونُوبِ
وهل يَجعل الارضَ الّتى آبيضَّ لَوْنُها * كلونِ الحِرار الخُمْسِ لونُ ذُنُوبى
يقول الثَّرَى كم رَمَّ تحتىَ للورَى * وسائدُ هامٍ او مُهودُ جُنُوبِ
وإنّى وإن لم آتِ خيرًا أَعُدُّهُ * لآمُلُ إرواءً بخَيْرِ ذَنُوب

(53)

الدهرُ إن ينصُرْك ينصُرْ بَعْدَها * ذا إِحْنةٍ فيَحُورُ كُلَّ مَحارِ
وهواجرُ الايّام يسلُبُ حَرُّها * ما أَوْدعتْهُ ذواهبُ الأَسْحارِ

(54)

بَطْنُ التراب كفانى شرَّ ظاهرِهِ * وبَيَّنَ العَدْلَ بين العبدِ والمَلِكِ
قد عشتُ عمرًا طويلًا ما علمتُ به * حِسًّا يُحَسُّ لجِنّيٍّ ولا مَلَكِ
والمُلْكُ للّه ما ضاعتْ أكابرُهُ * ولا أصاغرُ أَحْياءٍ ولا هُلُكِ
ان مات جسمٌ فهذى الارضُ تخزُنه * وان نأتْ عنه روحٌ فهى بالفَلَكِ

(55)

المرءُ يَقدم دنياه على خَطَرٍ * بالكرْه منه ويَنْآها على سَخَطِ
يَخيط إثمًا الى إثم فيلبسُهُ * كأنّ مَفْرَقه بالشَّيْب لم يُخَطِ

51. ٨ وأَقْرِبْ, *i.e.* الهَناءَ.

52. ٤ O كبعض الجرار الخمس marg. ٦ BL أُعِدُّه. O بغير with بخير.

53. ١ BC فيحورَ.

( 56 )

لقد بَرَحَتْ طيرٌ ولستُ بعائفٍ * وإن هاج لى بعضَ الغَرام بُروحُها
ارى هَذَيانًا طال من كلّ أُمّةٍ * يُضَمَّنُهُ ايجازُها وشُروحُها
وأوصالَ جسمٍ للتراب مآلُها * ولم يَدْرِ دارٍ اينَ تَذهبُ روحُها
ولا بُدَّ يومًا من غُدُوٍّ مبغَّضٍ * سنَغْدوهُ او من رَوْحةٍ سنَروحُها
ولو رَضِيَتْ دونُ النفوسِ بغيرها * لحُطّتْ بعَفْوٍ لا قِصاصٍ جُروحُها

( 57 )

اذا ما مضى نَفَسٌ فآحْسِبَنْـــهُ كالخَيْط من ثوب عُمْرٍ نَهَجْ
وإن هاجك الدهرُ فآصبِرْ له * وعشْ ذا وَقارٍ كأنْ لم تُهَجْ
فكم جَمْرة خمدتْ فآنقضتْ * وكان لها منذ حينٍ وَهَجْ
فيا قائدَ الجَيْش خَفِّضْ عليـــكَ فى غير حَظِّك يعلو الرَّهَجْ
زمانٌ حَباك قليلَ العَطآءِ ما زال يُكْثِرُ أَخْذَ المُهَجْ
فلا تُؤْذِ أَنْفُسَنا حَسْبُنا * قضآءٌ له بأذانا لَهَجْ
أَعِنْ باكيًا لَجَّ فى حُزْنه * وسَلْ ضاحِكَ القوم مِمَّ آبْتَهَجْ
وعالِمُنا المُنتهى كالصَّبيِّ قيل له فى آبتدآءٍ تَهَجْ

( 58 )

سَئِمْتُ الكونَ فى مِصْرٍ وكَفْرِ * ومَنْ لى أَن أَحُلَّ جُنوبَ قَفْرِ
أُعَلَّلُ حين أَغْرَثُ بالخُزامَى * وأَشْرَبُ إن ظَئِمْتُ نزيعَ جَفْرِ
ارى الايّامَ أَنْضآءَ البرايا * عليها منهُمُ أَشْباحُ سَفْرِ
فما يَبْرَقْنَ من زَوْلٍ عجيبٍ * ولا يَفْرَقْنَ من صَيْح ونَفْرِ
يَسِرْنَ بمن حَملنَ الدهرَ حتّى * يُنَخْنَ بهم الى أَبيات حَفْرِ

57. ٦ BC تُودِ.

58. ٤ BCLO صُبْح ونفر.

فما فَرْعُ الفتاة اذا توارتْ * بمُفتقِرٍ الى سَرْح وضَفْرِ
يفارقها الفتى والدمعُ جارٍ * كذاك جَرَتْ عوائدُ أُمّ دَفْرِ

( 59 )

يتحارب الطبعُ الذى مُزِجَتْ به * مُهَجُ الأَنام وعَقْلُهم فيَفُلُّهُ
ويظَلّ يُنظر ما سَناهُ بنافع * كالشمس يستُرُها الغَمامُ وظِلُّهُ
حتّى اذا حضر الحِمامُ تبيّنوا * أنّ الذى فعلوه جهلٌ كُلُّهُ

* * *

وتغرُّبُ الشِرّيرِ يُوجب حَتْفَهُ * مِثْلَ الوَجار اذا تسحَّبَ صلُّهُ
ولُزومُهُ الأَوطانَ أَبْقَى للرَّدَى * كالسِيدِ يُسْتَرُ فى الضَّراءِ أَزَلُّهُ
والنفسُ آلفةُ الحياةِ فدمعُها * يَجرى لِذِكْر فِراقِها مُنْهَلُّهُ

* * *

ولقد علمتُ فما أَسِفْتُ لفائتٍ * أَنّ البقيّة من مدايَ أَقَلُّهُ
والبَرُّ يَلتمس الحَلالَ ولم أَجِدْ * هذا الوَرَى إلّا فقيدًا حِلُّهُ

( 60 )

إِلٰهٌ قادرٌ وعَبيدُ سَوْءٍ * وجَبْرٌ فى المَذاهب وٱعْتِزالُ
وبالكَذِب ٱنْسَرَى وَضَحٌ وليلٌ * ولم تزل الخُطوبُ ولا تَزالُ

( 61 )

رَغِبْنا فى الحياة لفَرْط جَهْلٍ * وفَقْدُ حياتنا حَظٌّ رَغيبُ
شكا خُزَزٌ حوادثَها ولَيْثٌ * فما رُحِمَ الزَّئيرُ ولا الضَّغيبُ
شَهِدْتُ فلم أُشاهِدْ غيرَ نُكْرٍ * وغيَّبنى المُنَى فمتى أَغيبُ

(62)

عَلِمَ الإمامُ ولا اقولُ بظَنّهِ * أَنّ الدُّعاة بسَعْيها تَتَكَسَّبُ
هذا الهوآءُ يَلوحُ فيه لناظرٍ * صُوَرٌ ولكن عن قليلٍ تَرْسُبُ
والناسُ جنسٌ ما تميَّز واحدٌ * كُلُّ الجُسوم الى التراب تَنَسَّبُ
والأَرْىُ باطِنُهُ اذا ما ذُقْتَهُ * شَرْىٌ فما ذا لا أَبا لك تَلْسِبُ
وسيُقْفِرُ المِصْرُ الحريجُ بأَهله * ويغُصُّ بالإنْس الفَضآءُ السَّبْسَبُ

(63)

ايا جَسَدى لا تجزَعَنَّ من البِلَى * اذا صِرْتَ فى الغَبْرآء تَحْثَى وتُنْبَثُ
وان كان هذا الجسمُ قَبْلَ آفتراقهِ * خبيثًا فإنّ الفِعْل شرٌّ وأَخْبَثُ
مَناكبَ ساعاتى رَكِبْتُ فأَبتغى * لُباثًا وسَيْرُ الدهر لا يَتَلَبَّثُ
نهارٌ وليلٌ عوقبا أَنا فيهما * كأنّى بخَيْطَىْ باطلٍ أَتَشَبَّثُ
اظُنُّ زمانى كونَهُ وفَسادَهُ * وليدًا بتُرْب الارض يلهو ويَعْبَثُ

(64)

تُخيّمُ يا آبن آدَمَ فى آرتحالٍ * وترقُدُ فى ذَراك وأَنت سارى
ويأمُل ساكنُ الدنيا رَباحًا * وليس الحىُّ الّا فى خَسارِ
غدا العُمْيانُ فى شَرْق وغَرْبٍ * يعُدّون العِصىَّ من اليَسارِ

(65)

ورُبَّ نفْس أصابتْ عِيشةً رَغَدًا * لو لم تَبِتْ من منایاها على خَطَرِ
أُمورُ دنياك سَطْرٌ خَطَّهُ قَدَرٌ * وحُبُّها فى السجايا أَوّلُ السَّطَرِ

62. ١ The emendation بظِنّةٍ is unnecessary. Read, therefore, in the first line of the English version:

"The Imám, he knows—his tenets are not mine—"

٤ B ذُقْتَهُ.

63. ٤ O بخيط.

( 66 )

ما يفتأُ المرءُ والأَبْرادَ يُخْلِقُها * باللَّبْس عَصْرًا الى أن يلبَسَ الكِبَرا
وذاك بُرْدٌ اذا ما اجتابَهُ رجلٌ * أَلْغَى الحُبورَ وأَلْقَى بالفَم الحَبَرا
يا ساكنى الارضِ كم رَكْبٍ سألتُهمُ * بما فعلتم فلم أَعْرِفْ لكم خَبَرا
زالت خطوبٌ فلم تُذْكَرْ شدائدُها * والعَوْدُ ينسَى اذا ما أُعْفِىَ الدَّبَرا

* * *

٥ أَما رأيتَ فقيهَ المِصْر أَقْبَلَ من * دَفْن الصَّديقِ فلم يُوعَظْ بمن قَبَرا
أنتَ ابن وَقْتك والماضى حديثُ كَرًى * ولا حلاوةَ للباقى الذى غَبَرا

( 67 )

لقد مات جِنّىُّ الصِّبَى منذ بُرْهةٍ * وتأبى عَفارى القلب غيرَ مُرودِ
أَمَرَّتْ وأَمْرَتْ أُمّ دَفْر وإن حَلَتْ * فكم حلَّأَتْ قومًا غداةَ وُرودِ
شربتُ بَرودًا لم يَدَعْ نارَ غُلّةٍ * وعن مَنْكِبى أَلْقيتُ خيرَ بُرودِ

( 68 )

والناسُ كالنار كانوا فى نَشاءتهم * يُسْتَضْوَأُ السَّقْطُ منها ثم يَنْتَشِرُ
والارضُ تُنْبِتُ من نَخْل ومن عُشَرٍ * وما يخلَّدُ لا نخلٌ ولا عُشَرُ
لو يَعقلون لهنَّوْا أهلَ ميّتِهِمْ * ولم تَقُمْ لوليدٍ فيهمُ البُشُرُ

( 69 )

سَلُوا مَعْشَرَ المَوْتَى الذى جاءَ وافدًا * اليكم يخبِّرْ فهو أَقْرَبُكم عَهْدا
يحدِّثْكمُ انّ البلاد مقيمةٌ * على ما عَهِدتم ذلك الهَضْبَ والوَهْدا
ولم تفتأ الدنيا تغُرُّ خليلَها * وتُبْدله من غمْض أَجفانه سُهْدا
تُريهِ الدُّجَى فى هَيْئة النور خُدْعةً * وتُطعِمه صابًا فيحسِبُهُ شَهْدا
٥ وقد حملتْه فوق نَعْش وطال ما * سَرَى فوق عَنْس او علا فَرَسًا نَهْدا
ولم تَتّرك من حيلةٍ لتغُرَّهُ * ولم يُبقِ فى إخلاصه حُبَّها جَهْدا

66. ١ BCL والابرادُ. 67. ٣ B بُرودًا. 69. ٣ BCL اجفانها.

(70)

يحرّقُ نفْسَهُ الهِنْدىُّ خوفًا * ويَقْصُرُ دون ما صَنَعَ الجِهادُ
وما فعلتْه عُبّادُ النَّصارَى * ولا شَرْعيّةٌ صَبَأُوا وهادُوا
يقرّبُ جسمَهُ للنار عَمْدًا * وذلك منه دينٌ واجْتِهادُ
وموتُ المرء نومٌ طال جِدًّا * عليه وكلُّ عِيشتهِ سُهادُ
نودّعُ بالصلاة وَداعَ يأسٍ * ونُتْرَكُ فى التراب ولا نُهادُ
أُهالُ من الثرى والارضُ أُمٌّ * وأُمّك حَجْرُها نِعْمَ المِهادُ
اذا الروحُ اللطيفة زايلتْنى * فلا هَطَلَتْ على الرِّمَم العِهادُ

(71)

هو البَرُّ فى بحْر وإن سَكَنَ البَرّا * اذا هو جاء الخيرَ لم يَعْدَمِ الشَّرّا
وهل تَظْفَرُ الدنيا علىَّ بمِنّة * وما ساء فيها النفسَ أَضعافُ ما سَرّا
يلاقى حليفُ العيش ما هو كارهٌ * ولو لم يكن الّا الهواجرَ والقُرّا

(72)

لقد جاءنا هذا الشِتاءُ وتحتَهُ * فقيرٌ معرًّى او اميرٌ مُدَوَّجُ
وقد يُرْزَقُ المجدودُ أَقواتَ أُمّةٍ * ويُحْرَمُ قوتًا واحدٌ وهو أَحْوَجُ
ولو كانت الدنيا عروسًا وجدتَها * بما قتلتْ أَزواجَها لا تُزَوَّجُ
فعُجْ يَدَك اليُمْنَى لتشربَ طاهرًا * فقد عِيفَ للشُّرْب الإناءُ المُعَوَّجُ
على سَفَرٍ هذا الانامُ فخَلِّنا * لأَبْعَدِ بَيْنٍ واقعٍ نَتَحوَّجُ
ولا تَعْجَبَنْ من سالمٍ إنّ سالمًا * اخو غَمْرة فى زاخر يَتَمَوَّجُ
وهلّ هو الّا رائدٌ لعشيرة * يلاحظ برقًا فى الدُّجَى يَتَبَوَّجُ
ولولا دِفاعُ اللهِ لاقَى من الأَذَى * كما كان لاقى خامدٌ ومُتَوَّجُ

71. ٣ O حريف العيش.

72. ٣ BL وجدتُها.

(73)

تناهَبَت العيشَ النفوسُ بغِرّة * فان كنتَ تستطيعُ النّهابَ فناهِبِ
بقائىَ فى الدنيا علىَّ رزيّةٌ * وهل انا إلّا غابرٌ مثلُ ذاهِبِ
اذا خَلِقَ الانسان ظلّ حِمامُهُ * وإن نال يُسْرًا من أَجَلِّ المَواهِبِ
تَقادمَ عُمْرُ الدهر حتّى كأنّما * نجومُ الليالى شَيْبُ هذى الغَياهِبِ
* * *
تألّفُ غيّ الناس شرقًا ومَغْرِبًا * تكامَلَ فيهم باختلاف المَذاهِبِ
وانّ قَطوف الساعِ فيما عَلِمْتُهُ * أَحَثُّ مُرورًا من وَساع السَّلاهِبِ

(74)

يا ليلُ قد نام الشجىُّ ولم يَنَمْ * جُنْحَ الدُّجُنّة نَجْمُها المِسْهارُ
إن كانت الخَضْراءُ روضًا ناضرًا * فلعلّ زُهْرَ نُجومِها أَزْهارُ
والناسُ مثل النَّبْت يُظْهره الحَيا * ويكون اوّلَ هُلْكِهِ الإظهارُ
تَرعاهُ راعيةٌ وتهْتكُ بُرْدَهُ * أُخْرَى ومنه شقائقٌ وبَهارُ
ما ميَّز الاطفالَ فى أَشْباحها * للعَيْن حِلُّ وِلادةٍ وعِهارُ
والجهلُ أَغْلَبُ غيرَ عِلْمٍ أَنّنا * نَفْنَى ويَبْقَى الواحدُ القَهّارُ

(75)

تَسمَّى سُروراً جاهلٌ متخرّصٌ * بفيهِ البَرَى هل فى الزمان سُرورُ
نَعَمْ ثَمَّ جُزْءٌ من أُلوفٍ كثيرةٍ * من الخير والأَجْزاءُ بَعْدُ شُرورُ
يَسارٌ وعُدْمٌ وادّكارٌ وغفلةٌ * وعِزٌّ وذُلٌّ كلُّ ذاك غُرورُ
حوانا مكانٌ لا يجوز انتقالُهُ * ودهرٌ له بالساكنيه مُرورُ
فكُرَّ على الأَبطال او كَرِّ فى الوَغَى * لهذى الليالى حَمْلَةٌ وكُرورُ

(76)

أَتَغْضَبُ أن تُدْعَى لئيمًا مذمَّمًا * وحسْبُك لؤْمًا أنّ والِدك الدَّهْرُ
تزوّجَ دنياه الغَبىُّ بجهله * فقد نَشَزَتْ من بعدِ ما قُبِضَ المَهْرُ
تطهَّرْ ببُعْدٍ من أذاها وكَيْدِها * فتلك بَغىٌّ لا يصحُّ لها طُهْرُ
وأفنيتُ بالأنفاس عمرى مُجَزِّئًا * بها اليومَ ثمّ الشهرَ يَتبعه الشَّهْرُ
يسيرًا يسيرًا مثل ما أخَذَ المَدَى * على الناس ماشٍ فى جوانحه بُهْرُ
كذَرٍّ علا ظَهْرَ الكثيب فلم يزل * به السَّيْرُ حتّى صار من خَلْفهِ الظَّهْرُ

(77)

دَوْلاتكم شَمَعاتٌ يُستضاءُ بها * فبادِروها الى أن تَطْفَأَ الشَّمَعُ
والنفْسُ تَفْنَى بأنفاس مكرَّرة * وساطعُ النار تُخْبى نورَهُ اللُّمَعُ
كم سامعى اللفظِ قُوّالٍ كأنّهُمُ * تحت البسيطة ما قالوا ولا سَمِعوا

* * *

وقد سقتْهم غماماتٌ بكت زمنًا * بلا ٱبتسامٍ فما جادوا ولا دَمَعوا

(78)

تُرابُ جُسومُنا وهى التُّرابُ * اذا ولّى عن الآلِ ٱغْتِرابُ
تُراعُ اذا تُحِسُّ الى ثَراها * إيابًا وهو مَنْصَبُها القُرابُ
وذاك أقَلُّ للأَدْوآء فيها * وإن صحّت كما صحَّ الغُرابُ
هُمومٌ بالهَوآء معلَّقاتٌ * الى التشريف أنْفُسُها طِرابُ
فأرماحٌ يحطّمها طِعانٌ * وأسيافٌ يفلّلها ضِرابُ
تَنافسُ فى الحُطام وحَسْبُ شاكٍ * طَوًى قوتٌ وحِلْفِ صَدًى شَرابُ
وأفْسَدَ جَوْهَرَ الأحْساب أشْبٌ * كما فسدتْ من الخَيْل العِرابُ
وأمْلاكٌ تَبَحَّرُ فى غِناها * وإن وَرَدَ العُفاةُ فهُمْ سَرابُ

76. ٢ O دنياك. ٥ BO على النأى.

وقد يُغْرى أُسودَ الغِيل حِرْصٌ * فتَحْويها الحظائرُ والزِّرابُّ
متى لم يَضطرب من عَلْوَ جَدٍّ * فليس بنافعٍ منك آضْطِرابُ

(79)

سَرَيْنا وطالبُنا هاجعٌ * وعند الصباح حَمِدْنا السُّرَى
بنو آدمٍ يطلبون الثَّرآءَ عند الثُّريّا وعند الثَّرَى
فتًى زارعٌ وفتًى دارعٌ * كِلا الرجلَيْن غدا فآمْتَرَى
فهذا بعَيْنٍ وزايٍ يروحُ * وذاك يؤوبُ بضادٍ وَرَا

(80)

بقيتُ وما أَدرى بما هو غائبٌ * لعلّ الذى يمضى الى الله أَقْرَبُ
تَوَدُّ البقآءَ النفسُ من خِيفة الرَّدَى * وطولُ بقآءِ المرْءِ سَمٌّ مُجَرَّبُ
على الموت يَجتازُ المَعاشرُ كلّهم * مقيمٌ بأهليه ومن يَتَغَرَّبُ
وما الارضُ إلّا مثْلنا الرِّزْقَ تَبتغى * فتأكل من هذا الأَنام وتَشْرَبُ
وقد كذبوا حتّى على الشمس أَنّها * تُهانُ اذا حان الشُّروقُ وتُضْرَبُ
كأنّ هلالًا لاح للطعْن فيهمُ * حناهُ الرَّدَى وهو السِنانُ المُحَرَّبُ
كأنّ ضِياءَ الفَجْر سيفٌ يسُلُّهُ * عليهم صَباحٌ بالمنايا مُذَرَّبُ

(81)

ما بين مُوسَى ولا فِرْعَوْنَ تفرقةٌ * عند المنون بإكْبار وإِصْغارِ
كأنّها ذاتُ قُرٍّ أَطعمتْ لَهَبًا * ما ضَمَّهُ الحَطْبُ من سِدْرٍ ومن غارِ
او أُمُّ أَجْرٍ جَرَى قتلٌ على نَفَرٍ * حُرٍّ وعبدٍ فجرّتْهم الى الغارِ
ترمى بعُضْوَيْن ذى نُطْقٍ وذى خَرَسٍ * الى فمٍ لصُنوفِ الطُّعْم فَغّارِ

(82)

يَوَدُّ الفتى أَنّ الحياة بسيطةٌ * وأنّ شقآءَ العيش ليس يَبيدُ
كذاك نَعامُ القَفْر يَخْشَى من الردى * وقُوتاهُ مَرْوٌ بالفَلا وهَبيدُ

( 83 )

جرى المَيْنُ فيهم كابرًا بعدَ كابرٍ * عن الخُبْرِ يَحكى لا عن السَّلَف الحَبْرْ
خَبَرْتُ بنى الدنيا وأصبحتُ راغبًا * اليهم كأنّى ما شفانى بهم خُبْرْ
جبِلّةُ ظُلْم لا قوامَ بحَرْبها * وصيغةُ سَوْءٍ ما لمكسورها جَبْرْ
تلاوتُكم ليست لرُشْدٍ ولا هُدًى * ولكن لكم فيها التكاثُرُ والكِبْرْ

* * *

٥ وما العيشُ الّا عُبْرُ أَسْفارِ ظاعنٍ * لمُقلته ممّا يُمارسه العَبْرْ
تغبَّرتُها بالسَّيْر حتّى تركتُها * طليحَ رِكابٍ ما لأَخلافها غُبْرْ
وقد مات من بعدِ التغشْمر جهلُها * فغُيِّبَ إلّا أنّ هامتها القَبْرْ

( 84 )

أَرى جُزْءَ شهْد بين أَجْزآءِ عَلْقَمٍ * ولُبًّا يُنادى باللبيب لِتَعْقُمِ
وأَسقامَ دين إن يُرَجّ شفآءها * صحيحٌ يَطُلْ منه العنآءُ ويَسْقَمِ
وصُبْحًا وإظلامًا كأنّ مَداهما * من السِرِّ فى لونَيْهما بُرْدُ أَرْقَمِ
وحُكْمًا لهذا الدهر صاح بقائمٍ * من العالَم آجلِسْ او دعا جالسًا قُمِ
٥ كأنّ سُرور النفس من خَطَأ الفتى * متى ما يكن يُنْكَرْ عليه ويُنْقَمِ

( 85 )

رَبّى متى أَرْحَلُ عن هذه الـ * ـدنيا فانّى قد أَطَلْتُ المُقامْ
لم أدرِ ما نجْمى ولكنّه * فى النحْس مذ كان جَرَى وٱسْتَقامْ
فلا صَديقى يترجَّى يدى * ولا عدُوّى يتخشَّى ٱنْتِقامْ
والعيشُ سُقْمٌ للفتى مُنْصِبٌ * والموتُ يأتى بشفآء السَّقامْ
٥ والتُّربُ مَثْوايَ ومثواهُمُ * وما رأينا احدًا منه قامْ

84. ٥ B يُنْكِرْ عليه ويَنْقَمِ.

( 86 )

اتُـذْهَـبُ دارٌ بـالنُّـضـار ورَبُّـهـا * يخلِّفها عمّا قليلٍ ويَذْهَبُ
ارى قَبَسًا فى الجسم يُطفِئُهُ الردى * وما دُمْتَ حيًّا فهو ذا يَتَلَهَّبُ

( 87 )

دنـا رَجُـلٌ الـى عِرْسٍ لأَمْرٍ * وذاك لثالثٍ خُلِقَ ٱكْتِسابُ
فما زالت تُعانى الثِّقْلَ حتّى * أتاها الوَضْعُ وٱتَّصل الحِسابُ
تُرَدُّ الى الأُصول وكُلُّ حيٍّ * له فى الأَرْبَع القُدُمِ ٱنْتِسابُ

( 88 )

رحلتُ فـلا دنيا ولا ديـنَ نِـلْتُـهُ * وما أَوْبتى إلّا السفاهةُ والخُرْقُ
متى يُـخْلِصِ التقوى لِمولاهُ لا تَغِضْ * عطاياهُ من صلَّى وقِبْلَتُهُ الشَّرْقُ
أَرى حَيَوانَ الارض يرهَبُ حَـتْـفَـهُ * ويُـفْـزعـه رعدٌ ويُطْمعه بَرْقُ
فيا طائرُ ٱئمَنّى ويا ظَبْيُ لا تَخَفْ * شذايَ فما بينى وبينكما فَرْقُ

( 89 )

الوقتُ يُعْجِلُ أن تكونَ مُحَلِّلًا * عُقَدَ الحياةِ بأَنْ تَحُلَّ الزيجا
فالدهرُ لا يسخو بأَرْيٍ للفتى * حتّى يكونَ بما أَمَرَّ مزيجا

( 90 )

لا تُكْرموا جَسَدى اذا ما حَلَّ بى * رَيْبُ المنون فلا فضيلةَ للجَسَدْ
كالبُرْد كان على اللوابس نافقًا * حتّى اذا فنيتْ بشاشتُهُ كَسَدْ

( 91 )

تـمـتَّـعَ أَبـكـارُ الزمان بـأَيْـده * وجئنا بوَهْن بعد ما خَرِفَ الدَّهْرُ
فليتَ الفتى كالبدر جُدِّد عُمْره * يعود هـلالًا كلّما فَنِىَ الشَّهْرُ

86. ٢ C دمتُ. 87. Z 30, 49. ٣ O نُرَدُّ. 88. Z 38, 503.

( 92 )

حاجى نظيمُ جُمانٍ والحياةُ معى * سِلْكٌ قصيرٌ فيأبَى جَمْعَها القِصَرُ
امّا ٱلمُرادُ فجَمٌّ لا يُحيطُ به * شَرْحٌ ولكنّ عُمْر المرء مُخْتَصَرُ

( 93 )

قد شاب رأسى ومن نَبْت الثَّرَى جَسَدى * فالنبتُ آخِرُ ما يعتو به النَّهْرُ
اذا رَكِبْتَ لإدراك العُلَى سُفُنًا * فالبحرُ يَحْمِلُ ما لا يحمل النَّهَرُ

( 94 )

يغدو الفتى للأُمور يَلْمَحُ كالـ*ـبازى وفى طَرْف لُبّه سَدَرُ
لا أَزعمُ الصَّفْوَ مازجًا كَدَرًا * بل مَزْعَمى أنّ كلّه كَدَرُ

( 95 )

لا خيرَ من بَعْد خمسين ٱنقضت كَمَلًا * فى أن تُمارسَ أَمراضًا وأَرعاشا
وقد يعيشُ الفتى حتّى يقالَ له * ما مات عند لقآء الموت بل عاشا

( 96 )

ومُدّت حِبالُ الشمس من قَبْل عَصْرنا * على أُمَمٍ لم تَتَّرُكْ لهُمْ سِلْكا
وتُعجبنا الدنيا الهَلوكُ وإنّها * لأُمّ رجالٍ كُلُّهم سُقِىَ الهُلْكا
هما حالتا سَوْءٍ حياةٌ بلَوْعةٍ * وموتٌ فخَيِّرْ هذه النفْسَ او تِلْكا

( 97 )

سأَفعلُ خيرًا ما ٱستطعتُ فلا تَقُمْ * علىَّ صلاةٌ يومَ أُصْبِحُ هالِكا
فما فيكُمُ من خيّرٍ يُدَّعَى به * يفرِّجُ عنّى بالمَضيق المَسالِكا

( 98 )

الشُّهْبُ عظَّمها المليكُ ونصَّها * للعالَمين فواجبٌ إِعْظامُها
وأَرى الحياة وإن لَهِجْتَ بحُبّها * كالسِّلْك طوَّقك الأَذاةَ نِظامُها

93. ١ O يعنو. BL الزَّهَرُ. ٢ BL النَّهَرُ.
97. ١ Perhaps صلاةً ... تُقِمْ, but BC read as above.
98. ٢ O كالسلك اصناف الاذاة.

( 99 )

أَنا الجائرُ الظالِمُ * ومولاىَ بى عالِمُ
فيا لك من يقظةٍ * كأنّى بها حالِمُ

( 100 )

اذا سألوا عن مَذْهبى فهو بيّنٌ * وهل أنا إلّا مثل غيرىَ أَبْلَهُ
خُلقتُ من الدنيا وعشتُ كأهلها * اجدُّ كما جدّوا وألهو كما لَهُوا
وأشهدُ أنّى بالقضآء حللتُها * وأَرحلُ عنها خائفًا اتألّهُ
وما النفسُ بالفعل الجميل مُدِلّةٌ * ولكنّ عقلى من حِذارٍ مُدَلّهُ

( 101 )

كم غادةٍ مثل الثُّريّا فى العُلَى * والحُسْنِ قد أَضْحَى الثَّرَى من حُجْبِها
ولعُجْبِها ما قربَّتْ مِرْآتَها * نَزّهتُ خِلّى عن مَقالى عُجْ بِها

( 102 )

زاره حَتْفُهُ فقطَّب للموت وألْقَى من بَعْدها التَّقْطيبا
زوّدوه طيباً ليَلْحَقَ بالناس وحَسْبُ الدفين بالتُّرْب طيبا
نام فى قبره ووُسِّدَ يُمْناهُ فخِلْناه قام فينا خَطيبا

( 103 )

لكَوْنُ خِلّك فى رمْسٍ اعزُّ له * من أن يكونَ مليكًا عاقِدَ التاجِ
المَلْكُ يَحتاجُ آلافًا لتنصُرَهُ * والموتُ ليس الى خَلْقٍ بمُحْتاجِ

( 104 )

قَدِمَ الفتى ومَضَى بغير تثيّةٍ * كهلالِ اوّلِ ليلةٍ من شَهْرِهِ
لقد آستراح من الحياة معجَّلٌ * لو عاش كابَدَ شِدّةً فى دَهْرِهِ

103. ٢ C ألّافًا.

100. S 106.

( 105 )

بِنْتُ نَصارَى نَزَلَتْ من ذَرًى * عالٍ الى قبرٍ وناوُوسِ
فى حُلَلٍ غُبْرٍ وكم أَشبهتْ * ثيابُها حُلّةَ طاوُوسِ

( 106 )

اجتنِبِ الناس وعشْ واحدًا * لا تَظلمِ القومَ ولا تُظْلَمِ
وجدتُ دنياك وإن ساعفتْ * لا بدَّ من وَقْعتها الصَّيْلَمِ
لو بُعِثَ المنصورُ نادَى ايا * مدينةَ التسليم لا تَسْلَمى
قد سكن القفرَ بنو هاشمٍ * وٱنتقل المُلكُ الى الدَّيْلَمِ
٥ لو كنت أَدرى انّ عُقباهمُ * لَذاك لم أَقتُلْ أَبا مُسْلِمِ
قد خدم الدَّوْلةَ مستنصَحًا * فأَلبستْهُ شِيةَ العِظْلِمِ

( 107 )

أَرى حَلَبًا حازها صالحٌ * وجال سِنانٌ على جِلّقا
وحسّانُ فى سَلَفَىْ طىّءٍ * يصرِّف من غَزّةٍ أَبْلَقا
فلمّا رأت خيلُهم بالغُبارِ * ثَغامًا على جَيْشهم عُلِّقا
رمتْ جامعَ الرَّمْلة المستضامَ * فأَصْبح بالدم قد خُلِّقا
٥ وما ينفع الكاعبَ المستباةَ هامٌ على عَضَبٍ فُلِّقا
وطُلَّ قتيلٌ فلم يُدَّكَرْ * وغُلَّ اسيرٌ فما أُطْلِقا
وكم تركتْ آهلًا وَحْدَهُ * وكم غادرتْ مُثريًا مُمْلِقا
يسائِلُ فى الحىّ عن ماله * وما القولُ فى طائر حَلَّقا

106. ٥ B لِذاك. ٦ BL مُستَنْصِحًا.

107. S 105. ٢ BCLO من عزّه, corr. by Von Kremer. ٥ عَضَب app. = عَضْب. O ان هامهم بعدها فلّقا.

( 108 )

يعود فقيدُ المُلك إن عاد جَدُّهُ * مَعَدٌّ اليكم او أَبوهُ نِزارُ
وما صحّ للمرء المحصِّل أنّه * بكُوفانَ قبرٌ للإمام يُزارُ
اخو الدين من عادَى القبيحَ وأصبحت * له حُجْزةٌ من عِفّةٍ وإزارُ

( 109 )

يا ملوك البلاد فُزْتم بنَسْء العُمْر والجَوْرُ شأْنُكم فى النَّسآءِ
ما لكم لا ترونَ طُرْقَ المَعالى * قد يزورُ الهيجآء زِيرُ نِسآءِ
يَرتجى الناسُ أن يقومَ إمامٌ * ناطقٌ فى الكتيبة الخَرْسآءِ
كذب الظنُّ لا إمامَ سِوى العقـ * ـلِ مُشيرًا فى صُبْحه والمَسآءِ

( 110 )

وما زال عَرّافُ الكواكب ذاكرًا * إمامًا كنَجْم فى الدُّجُنّة فارِدِ
وما يَجمعُ الأَشتاتَ إلّا مهذَّبٌ * من القوم يُحْمى باردًا فوق بارِدِ

( 111 )

ويقوم مَلْكٌ فى الانام كأنّه * مَلَكٌ يبرِّحُ بالخبيث المارِدِ
صَنَعُ اليدَيْن بقتْل كلِّ مُخالفٍ * بالسيف يَضرب بالحديد البارد
قالوا سَيَمْلكنا إمامٌ عادلٌ * يرمى أَعادِيَنا بسهْم صارِدِ
والارضُ مَوْطِنُ شِرّةٍ وضغائنٍ * ما أَسْمحتْ بسُرور يومٍ فارِدِ

( 112 )

ألا تتّقون الله رَهْطَ مُسَيْلِمٍ * فقد جُرتمُ فى طاعة الشَّهَواتِ
ولا تَتْبعوا الشيطان فى خُطواته * فكَمْ فيكمُ من تابعِ الخُطَواتِ
عَمدتم لرأْى المَثْنويّة بعد ما * جرتْ لذّةُ التوحيد فى اللّهَواتِ

108. ٣ B عاد. 109. Z 30, 43. ٢ OZ زير النسآء.
112. S 93. ١ BCL مسلّم.

ومن دونِ ما أَبْديتُمُ خُضِبَ القَنا * ومار نجيعُ الخيل فى الهَبَواتِ
فما آستحسنتْ هذى البهائمُ فِعْلكم * من الغىّ فى الأُمّات والحَمَواتِ
وأَيْسَرُ ما حَلّلتُمُ نَحْرُ ذارعٍ * يعُمّكمُ بالسُّكر والنَّشَواتِ
جعلتم عَليًّا جُنّةً وهو لم يزل * يعاقِب من خَمْرٍ على حُسَواتِ
سألْنا مَجُوسًا عن حقيقة دينها * فقالت نَعَمْ لا نَنْكحُ الأَخَواتِ
وذلك فى أَصْل التمجُّس جائزٌ * ولكن عددناه من الهَفَواتِ
ونأبَى فظيعاتِ الامور ونبتغى * سجودًا لنُور الشمس فى الغَدَواتِ

* * *

تهاونتُمُ بالذِّكْر لمّا أَتاكُمُ * ولم تَحْفِلوا بالصَّوْم والصَّلَواتِ
رَجَوْتم إماماً فى القِران مضلَّلًا * فلمّا مضى قلتم إلى سَنَواتِ

(113)

اذا ما رأيتم عُصْبةً هَجَريّةً * فمن رأْيها للناس هَجْرُ المَساجِدِ
وللدهر سِرٌّ مُرقدٌ كلَّ ساهرٍ * على غِرّة او مُوقظٌ كلَّ هاجِدِ
يقولون تأثيرُ القِران مغيِّرٌ * من الدين آثارَ السَّراة الأَماجِدِ
متى يَنزلِ الأمرُ السماوىُّ لا يُفِدْ * سِوى شَبَح رُمحُ الكَمىّ المُناجِدِ
وإن لَحِقَ الإسلامَ خَطْبٌ يغُضّه * فما وجدتْ مِثلًا له نَفْسُ واجِدِ
وإن عظّموا كَيْوانَ عظّمتُ واحدًا * يكون له كيوانُ اوّلَ ساجِدِ

(114)

وجآءتنا شرائعُ كلّ قومٍ * على آثار شىءٍ رَتَّبوهُ
وغيَّر بعضُهمْ اقوالَ بعضٍ * وأَبطلَتِ النُّهَى ما أَوْجَبوهُ
فلا تَفرحْ اذا رُجّبتَ فيهم * فقد رفعوا الدنى ورجبوه

113. Z 38, 499. ٤ شَبَح appears to be used in the sense of شَبَحُ باطلٍ. We might read شَنَج (a shrinking of the skin).
114. S 107.

وبدَّل ظاهرَ الإسلام رهطٌ * ارادوا الطعْنَ فيه وشَذَّبوهُ
وما نطقوا به تشبيبُ أَمْرٍ * كما بَدَأَ المديحَ مُشَبِّبوهُ
ويُذْكَرُ أنّ فى الايّام يومًا * يقوم من التراب مُغَيَّبوهُ

(115)

وآخْشَ الملوكَ وياسِرْها بطاعتها * فالمَلْكُ للارض مثل الماطر السانى
ان يَظلموا فلهم نفعٌ يعاش به * وكم حَمَوْكَ برَجْلٍ او بفُرْسانِ
وهل خَلَتْ قَبْلُ من جَوْر ومظلمةٍ * اربابُ فارسَ او اربابُ غَسّانِ
خَيْلٌ اذا سُوّمتْ سامتْ وما حُبستْ * إلّا بلُجْم تُعَنّيها وأَرْسانِ

(116)

سلطانُك النارُ إن تَعْدِلْ فنافعةٌ * وإن تَجُرْ فلها ضَيْرٌ وإحْراقُ
وقُرْبُهُ اللُّجّ إن اعطاك فائدةً * فليس يُؤْمَنُ إهلاكٌ وإغْراقُ

(117)

مُلَّ المُقامُ فكم أُعاشرُ أُمّةً * أَمَرَتْ بغير صلاحها أُمَرآءها
ظلموا الرعيّة وآستجازوا كَيْدَها * فعَدَوْا مَصالحها وهُمْ أُجَرآءها

(118)

اذا ما تبيَّنّا الأُمورَ تكشَّفتْ * لنا وأميرُ القوم للقوم خادِمُ

(119)

خَلِّ العِبادَ وما آختاروا فمَلْكُهُمُ * اذا نَظرتَ كعبدٍ راحَ مُؤْتَجَرِ
يُغْنيك ظِلُّ سَيالٍ تستظلُّ به * عن سائلِ التِّبْرِ فى البُنْيان والحَجَرِ

(120)

يسوسون الأُمور بغير عقلٍ * فيَنْفَدُ أَمْرُهم ويقال ساسَهْ
فأُفَّ من الحياة وأُفَّ منّى * ومن زمنٍ رئاستُهُ خَساسَهْ

115. Z 38, 524. ١ B فالمُلك. 116. Z 31, 480.
118. Z 38, 517. 119. ١ B فمُلكهم.
120. Z 31, 476. ١ BCOZ فيَنْفُذُ. O حكمهم.

( 121 )

يكفيك حُزْنًا ذَهابُ الصالحين معًا * ونحن بَعْدَهمُ فى الارض قُطّانُ
انّ العِراق وانّ الشأْم مذ زمنٍ * صِفْرانِ ما بهما للمَلْك سُلْطانُ
ساسَ الانامَ شياطينٌ مسلَّطةٌ * فى كلّ مِصْر من الوالينَ شَيْطانُ
من ليس يَحْفِلُ خُمْصَ الناس كلّهِمِ * إن بات يشربُ خمرًا وهو مِبْطانُ

( 122 )

ما قَرَّ طاسُك فى كفّ المُدير له * إلّا وقِرْطاسُك المرعوبُ مَرْعُوبُ
تُضْحى وبطْنُك مثل الكَعْب أَبْرَزَهُ * رِىٌّ ورأْسُك مثل القَعْب مَشْعُوبُ

( 123 )

عليك بفِعْل الخير لو لم يكن له * من الفضل إلّا حُسْنُهُ فى المَسامِعِ
لعَمْرُكَ ما فى عالَم الارض زاهدٌ * يقينًا ولا الرُّهْبانُ أَهْلُ الصَّوامِعِ
ارى أُمرآءَ الناس يُمْسون شَرَّهم * اذا خطفوا خَطْفَ البُزاة اللوامِعِ
وفى كلّ مِصْر حاكمٌ فموفَّقٌ * وطاغٍ يُحابى فى أَخَسّ المَطامِعِ
يجورُ فيَنْفى المِلْكَ عن مستحقّهِ * فتُسْكَبُ أَسْرابُ العيون الدَّوامِعِ
ومن حَوْلِهِ قومٌ كأنّ وُجوههم * صَفًا لم يُلَيَّنْ بالغُيوث الهَوامِعِ

( 124 )

كأنّ نفوس الناس واللهُ شاهدٌ * نفوسُ فَراشٍ ما لهنّ حُلومُ
وقالوا فقيهٌ والفقيهُ مُمَوِّهٌ * وحِلْفُ جِدالٍ والكَلامُ كُلومُ

( 125 )

فى البَدْو خُرّابُ أَذوادٍ مسوَّمةٍ * وفى الجوامع والأَسواق خُرّابُ
فهٰؤلآءِ تسمَّوْا بالعُدولِ أَوِ التُّجّارِ وٱسمُ أُولاك القوم أَعْرابُ

121. Z 38, 520. ٢ Z للمُلك.
123. Z 31, 478. ٥ BC يجوز فينفى المُلك.
124. ٢ O يقولون فقه والفقيه.
125. Z 30, 49.

( 126 )

وأَىُّ ٱمرىءٍ فى الناس أُلْفِىَ قاضيًا * فلم يُمْضِ أَحكامًا كحُكمِ سَدومِ
أَبَتْ فاقداتُ الحِسِّ حمْلَ رزيّةٍ * وهل راب صخرًا نَحْتُهُ بقَدومِ

( 127 )

لعلّ أُناسًا فى المحاريب خوَّفوا * بآيٍ كَناسٍ فى المشارب أَطْرَبوا
اذا رام كيدًا بالصلاة مُقيمُها * فتاركُها عَمْدًا الى الله أَقْرَبُ
فلا يُمْسِ فخّارًا من الفَخْرِ عائدٌ * الى عُنْصُر الفخّار للنفْع يُضْرَبُ
لعلّ إِناءً منه يُصْنَعُ مرّةً * فيأكلُ فيه من ارادَ ويَشْرَبُ
ويُحْمَلُ من ارضٍ لأُخرى وما دَرَى * فواهًا له بعدَ البِلَى يَتَغَرَّبُ

( 128 )

طَلَبَ الخسائسَ وٱرتقى فى مِنْبَرٍ * يَصِفُ الحِسابَ لأُمّةٍ لِيَهُولَها
ويكون غيرَ مصدِّقٍ بقيامةٍ * أَمْسَى يُمَثِّلُ فى النفوس ذُهُولَها

( 129 )

يتلون أَسفارهم والحقُّ يُخبرنى * بأنّ آخِرَها مَيْنٌ وأَوَّلَها
صَدَقْتَ يا عقلُ فلْيَبْعَدْ اخو سَفَهٍ * صاغ الاحاديثَ إِفْكًا او تأَوَّلَها
وليس حَبْرٌ ببِدْعٍ فى صحابته * إن سام نفعًا بأَخبار تَقَوَّلَها
وانّما رام نِسوانًا تزوَّجها * بما ٱفتراهُ وأَموالًا تَمَوَّلَها

( 130 )

رُوَيْدَكَ قد غُررتَ وأنت حُرٌّ * بصاحب حيلةٍ يَعِظُ النِّسآءا
يحرِّمُ فيكمُ الصَّهْبآءَ صُبحًا * ويشربها على عَمْدٍ مَسآءا

127. Z 30, 48. ١ Z خُوّفوا بأَيِّ كِناسٍ. B بأَيٍّ. ٤ Z فيأكل منه.
128. Z 38, 514. 130. ١ BCL النسآء. ٢ BCL مسآء.

(131)

لو كان لى أمرٌ يطاوَعُ لم يَشِنْ * ظَهْرَ الطريق يَدَ الحياةِ مُنَجِّمُ
أعْمَى بخيلٌ او بصيرٌ فاجرٌ * نَوْءا الضلال به مُرِبٌّ مُنْجِمُ
يغدو بأسْهُمه يُحاول مَكْسَبًا * فيُديرُ أُسْطُرْلابَهُ ويُرَجِّمُ
وقفتْ به الورْهاءُ وهى كأنّها * عند الوُقوف على عَرينٍ تَهْجِمُ
سألتُه عن زَوْجٍ لها متغيّرٍ * فآهتاج يكتب بالرِّقان ويُعْجِمُ
ويقول ما آسمُكِ وآسمُ أُمّك إنّنى * بالظنّ عمّا فى الغُيوب مُتَرْجِمُ
يُؤْلى بأنّ الجِنّ تَطْرُقُ بيتَهُ * وله يَدينُ فصيحُها والأعْجَمُ
والمرء يَكْدَحُ فى البلاد وعِرْسُهُ * فى المِصْر تأكل من طعام يُؤْجَمُ
أفما يكُرُّ على معيشته الفتى * إلّا بما نبذتْ اليه الأنْجُمُ
رَجْمُ التنائف بالرِكاب أعَزُّ من * كسْبٍ يُحَقُّ لرَبّهِ لو يُرْجَمُ
آهٍ لأسرار الفؤاد غواليًا * فى الصدر أُسْتُرُ دونها وأُجَمْجِمُ
عجبًا لكاذبِ مَعْشرٍ لا ينثنى * غِبَّ العقوبةِ وهو أخْرَسُ أضْجَمُ
كيف التخلُّصُ والبسيطةُ لُجّةٌ * والجَوُّ غَيْمٌ بالنوائب يَسْجُمُ
فسد الزمانُ فلا رَشادٌ ناجمٌ * بين الانام ولا ضلالٌ منجِمُ
أسْرِجْ وألْجِمْ للفرار فكلُّهم * فيما يَسوءك مُسرِجٌ او مُلجِمُ
والخيرُ أزْهَرُ ما اليه مُسارِعٌ * والشرُّ أكْدَرُ ليس عنه مُحْجِمُ
ضحكوا اليك وقد أتَيْتَ بباطلٍ * ومتى صَدَقْتَ فهم غِضابٌ رُجَّمُ
يَحميك منهم أن تُمِرَّ عليهمُ * فاذا حلوتَ عَدَتْ عليك العُجَّمُ

131. ٣ C يغدو بزخرفة. BLO بأسهمه. B gives بزخرفة and L بزُخْرُفه as a variant. ٤ BL على عُزَيْر تهجم. L in marg. عرين.

( 132 )

لقد بكرتْ فى خُفّها وإزارها * لتسأَلَ بالأمر الضريرَ المُنَجِّما
وما عنده علمٌ فيُخبرَها به * ولا هو من اهل الحِجَى فيُرَجِّما
يقول غدًا او بعدَهُ وقْعُ ديمةٍ * يكونُ غِياثًا أن تَجودَ وتَسْجُما
ويُوهِمُ جُهّالَ المَحَلّة أنّه * يظلّ لأَسرار الغُيوب مُتَرْجِما
ه ولو سألوه بالذى فوق صدره * لجآءَ بمَيْن او أَرَمَّ وجَمْجَما

( 133 )

سألتْ منجّمها عن الطفل الذى * فى المَهْد كم هو عائشٌ من دَهْرِهِ
فأجابها مائةٌ ليأخُذَ دِرْهمًا * وأَتَى الحِمامُ وليدَها فى شَهْرِهِ
قُلِبَ الزمانُ فرُبَّ خَوْدٍ تبتغى * زَوْجًا وتَبذل غاليًا من مَهْرِه
* * *
كره الجهولُ بَناتِهِ وسليلُهُ * أَجْنَى لما يغتالُهُ من صِهْرِهِ
ه أَعْدَى عدوٍّ لابن آدمَ خِلْتُهُ * ولدٌ يكون خروجُهُ من ظَهْرِهِ
وسفاهةُ الانسان مُوهمةٌ له * بَذَّ القوارحِ فى الرِّهان بمُهْرِهِ

( 134 )

أن الطبيب وذا التنجيمِ ما فتئا * مشهَّرَيْنِ بتقويم وكُنّاشِ
يعلّلان وفى التعليل مأربةٌ * ويستميلانِ قلْبَ المُتْرَف الناشى

( 135 )

قطعتَ البلادَ فمن صاعدٍ * بغَيْثِ النَّوال ومن هابِطِ
تَمُدُّ عصاكَ الى النابحاتِ * فيعجَبْنَ من جأْشك الرابِطِ
وتغبطُ كلًّا على ما حواهُ * وما لك فى العيش من غابط
وقفتَ على كلّ بابٍ رأيـ * ـتَ حتّى نهاك أبو ضابِطِ

133. ٦ B القوارحُ.

( 136 )

تُقْوِى فيُهْدَى اليك الزادُ عن عُرُضٍ * وتَقتَرى الارضَ جَوّالًا فتَقْتَرِفُ
تَرومُ رِزْقًا بأن سمَّوْك متّكِلًا * وأَدْيَنُ الناسِ من يَسْعَى ويَحْتَرِفُ
يكفيك أُدْمًا بنَحْضٍ مآءِ نابتةٍ * وظُلْمَكَ النَّحْلَ ما يُعْطيكَهُ الضَّرِفُ

( 137 )

أَوْقدتَ نارًا بآفتكارك أَظهرتْ * نَهْجًا وأَنتَ على سَناها عاشى
متكهّنٌ ومنجّمٌ ومعزِّمٌ * وجميعُ ذاك تحيُّلٌ لمَعاشِ
قد أُرْعِشَتْ يدُ سائل من كَبْرةٍ * ولنائلٍ بُسِطَتْ على الإِرْعاشِ

( 138 )

بنى الآدابِ غرّتْكم قديمًا * زَخارفُ مثل زَمْزَمة الذُّبابِ
وما شُعرآءُكم إلّا ذِئابٌ * تَلَصَّصُ فى المدائح والشَّبابِ
أَضَرُّ لمن تَوَدُّ من الأَعادى * وأَسْرَقُ للمَقال من الزَّبابِ
أُقارِضُكم ثنآءً غير حقٍّ * كأنّا منه فى مَجْرَى سِبابِ
٥ أَأُذْهِبُ فيكمُ ايّامَ شَيْبى * كما أَذهبتُ ايّامَ الشَّبابِ

* * *

وأَلقيتُ الفصاحةَ عن لسانى * مسلَّمةً الى العَرَب اللِّبابِ
شُغولٌ ينقضينَ بغير حَمْدٍ * ولا يَرجعنَ إلّا بالتَّبابِ
ذَرُونى يَفْقِدِ الهَذَيانَ لفظى * وأُغْلِقُ للحِمام علىَّ بابى

( 139 )

عِشْ بخيلًا كأَهل عَصْرك هذا * وتبالَهْ فانّ دهْرك أَبْلَهْ
قومُ سَوْءٍ فالشِّبْلُ منهم يَغول الـ * ـلَّيْثَ فَرْسًا والليثُ يأكل شِبْلَهْ
ان تُرِدْ أن تخُصَّ حُرًّا من الناس بخيرٍ فخُصَّ نَفْسَك قَبْلَهْ

138. ٢ BCL السِّبابِ. Text O.

( 140 )

كُفّى دُموعَكِ للتفرّق وٱطلبى * دَمْعًا يبارَك مثل دَمْع الزاهِدِ
فبقطرة منه تَبوخُ جَهَنَّمٌ * فيما يقال حديثُ غيرِ مُشاهِدِ
خافى إلٰهَكِ وٱحذرى من أُمّةٍ * لم يَلبسوا فى الدين ثوبَ مُجاهِدِ
أكلوا فأَفنَوْا ثمّ غنّوْا وٱنتشَوْا * فى رقْصهم وتمتّعوا بالشاهِدِ
حالت عُهودُ الخَلْق كم من مُسْلِمٍ * أَمْسَى يرومُ شفاعةً بمُعاهِدِ
وهو الزمانُ قضى بغير تناصفٍ * بين الأنام وضاع جَهْدُ الجاهِدِ
سَهِدَ الفتى لمَطالبٍ ما نالها * وأصابها من بات ليس بساهِدِ

( 141 )

المالُ يُسْكِتُ عن حقٍّ ويُنْطِقُ فى * بُطْلٍ وتُجْمِعُ إكرامًا له الشِّيَعُ
وجِزْيةُ القوم صُدّتْ عنهمُ فغَدَتْ * مَساجدُ القوم مقرونًا بها البِيَعُ

( 142 )

لهفى على ليلة ويومٍ * تألّفتْ منهما الشُهورُ
وأُلفيا عُنْصُرَىْ زمانٍ * ليس لأسراره ظُهورُ
قد أصبح الدينُ مضمحِلًّا * وغيَّرتْ آيَهُ الدُّهورُ
فلا زكاةٌ ولا صيامٌ * ولا صلاةٌ ولا طَهورُ
وٱعتاضَ حِلَّ النكاح قومٌ * بنِسْوةٍ ما لها مُهورُ

( 143 )

لو نَطَقَ الدهرُ فى تصرّفه * لعدَّنا كُلَّنا من التَّفَتِ
قال لنا إنّنى أَحُجُّ الى الـ * ـلّهِ وأنتمْ أَقْبَحُ الرَّفَثِ
نفشتُكم مرّةً على غَلَطٍ * منّى فهل تَعْذِرون فى النَّفَثِ

( 144 )

قد فاضت الدنيا بأَدناسِها * على برایاها وأَجناسِها
والشرُّ فی العالم حتّی ٱلّتی * مَكسبُها من فضلِ عِرْناسِها
وكلّ حیٍّ فوقها ظالمٌ * وما بها أَظْلَمُ من ناسِها

( 145 )

عصًا فی ید الأَعمی یروم بها الهُدَی * أَبَرُّ له من كلّ خِدْنٍ وصاحِبِ
فأَوسِعْ بنی حَوّآءَ هجرًا فانّهم * یسیرون فی نهْج من الغدْر لاحِبِ
وإن غیّر الإثمُ الوجوهَ فما ترى * لدى الحَشْرِ إلّا كلَّ أَسْوَدَ شاحِبِ
اذا ما اشار العقلُ بالرُّشْد جرَّهم * الى الغیّ طبعٌ أَخْذُهُ أَخْذُ ساحِبِ

( 146 )

لو یَفهم الناسُ ما أَبناؤهم جُلُبٌ * وبیعَ بالفَلْس أَلْفٌ منهُمُ كَسَدوا
فوَیْحَهم بِئْسَ ما رَبّوا وما حَضنوا * فهی الخدیعةُ والأَضغانُ والحَسَدُ

* * *

وهٰكذا كان اهلُ الارض مذ فُطروا * فلا یظُنَّ جَهولٌ انّهم فَسَدوا

( 147 )

غَنِینا عُصوراً فی عوالمَ جمّةٍ * فلم نَلْقَ إلّا عالَمًا مُتَلاعِنا
اذا فاتهم طعْنُ الرماح فمَحْفِلٌ * ترى فیه مطعونًا علیه وطاعِنا
هنیئًا لطفلٍ أَزْمَعَ السَّیْرَ عنهمُ * فوَدَّعَ من قبْلِ التعارُف ظاعِنا

( 148 )

رأیتُ قضآءَ الله أَوْجَبَ خَلْقَهُ * وعادَ علیهم فی تصرّفه سَلْبا
وقد غلب الأَحیآءَ فی كلّ وِجْهةٍ * هواهم وإن كانوا غطارفةً غُلْبا
كلابٌ تغاوتْ او تعاوتْ لجیفةٍ * وأَحسبُنی أَصبحتُ ألْأَمَها كَلْبا
أَبَیْنا سِوَى غِشّ الصُّدور وانّما * یَنالُ ثوابَ الله أَسْلَمُنا قَلْبا
وأَیَّ بنی الایّام یحمد قائلٌ * ومن جرَّب الاقوامَ أَوْسَعَهم ثَلْبا

145. ١ L gives یَؤُمّ as a variant of یروم. ٣ L gives یُرَی and كُلّ as variants.

146. ١ O وبیع بالسلك.

( 149 )

النفسُ فى العالم العُلْوىّ مَرْكَزُها * وليس فى الجَوّ للأَجساد مُزْدَرَعُ
تفرَّعَ الناسُ عن اصلٍ به دَرَنٌ * فالعالَمون اذا ميَّزْتَهم شَرَعُ
والجَدُّ آدَمُ والمَثْوَى أَديمُ ثَرًى * وإن تخالفَت الأَهْواءُ والشِرَعُ

* * *

تشابَهَ الإِنْسُ إلّا أن يَشِذَّ حِجًى * والطيرُ شَتَّى ومنها الفُتْحُ والمُرَعُ

( 150 )

يقول لك آنعِمْ مُصْبَحًا متودّدٌ * اليك وخيرٌ منه أَغْلَبُ أَصْبَحُ
رجوتَ بقُرْبٍ من خليلك مَرْبَحًا * وبُعْدُك منه فى الحقائق أَرْبَحُ
اذا أنت لم تَهْرُبْ من الإِنس فآعترفْ * بطُلْسٍ تَعاوَى او ثعالبَ تَضْبَحُ
ومارسْ بحُسن الصبر بَلْواك إن هُمُ * أَتوا بقبيح فالذى جئتَ أَقْبَحُ
٥ تروحُ الى فِعْل السفيه وتغتدى * وتُمْسى على غير الجميل وتُصْبِحُ
كأنّ خُطوب الدهر بحرٌ فمن يَمُتْ * بفرْط صَداهُ فهو فى اللُّجّ يَسْبَحُ

( 151 )

اذا هبّت جَنوبٌ او شَمالٌ * فأَنتَ لكلّ مُقتادٍ جَنيبُ
رُوَيْدَكَ إن ثلاثون آستقلّت * ولم يُنِبِ الفتى فمتى يُنيبُ

( 152 )

لو غُربل الناسُ كيما يُعْدَموا سَقَطًا * لَما تحصَّلَ شىءٌ فى الغَرابيلِ
او قيل للنار خُصّى من جَنَى أَكلتْ * أَجسادَهم وأَبَتْ أَكْلَ السَّرابيلِ

* * *

سُبْحانَ من أَلهم الأَجناسَ كلَّهمُ * أَمرًا يقود الى خَبْل وتَخْبيلِ
لَحْظَ العُيون وأَهواءَ النفوس وإِهْـ * ـواءَ الشِفاهِ الى لَثْمٍ وتَقْبيلِ

150. ١ BL مُصْبِحًا. CO مُصبحًا.

(153)

واللُّبُّ حاولَ أن يهذِّبَ أَهْلَهُ * فاذا البريّةُ ما لها تَهْذيبُ
من رام إِنقاءَ الغُراب لِكَىْ يرى * وَضَحَ الجَناحِ أَصابه تَعْذيبُ

(154)

ان عذُب المَيْنُ بأَفواهكم * فانّ صِدْقى بفَمى أَعْذَبُ
طلبتُ للعالَم تهذيبهم * والناس ما صُفُّوا ولا هُذِّبوا

(155)

يبايِنُ شكلُ غيرَهُ فى حياته * فان هَلَكا لم تُلْفِ بينهما فَرْقا
ومن يَفتقدْ حالَ الزمان وأهلهِ * يذُمّ بهم غَرْبًا من الارض او شَرْقا
يجدْ قولهم مَيْنًا ووُدَّهمُ قِلًى * وخَيْرَهمُ شَرًّا وصَنْعتهم خُرْقا
وبِشْرَهمُ خَدْعًا وفَقْرهمُ غِنًى * وعِلْمهم جهلًا وحِكْمتهم زَرْقا

* * *

اذا طلبوا أَقْصَى العُلَى اتَّخذوا له * بصُمّ العَوالى فى تَرائبكم طُرْقا
اذا كنتمُ أَوراقَ أَثْل زَهَوْا لكم * جَرادَ نِبالٍ كى تُبيدَكمُ وَرْقا
أَطارِقَ همٍّ ضافَ هل انت عاذرٌ * متى لم تجدْ بى عند مُرتحَلٍ طِرْقا
وأَعْوزنى مآءٌ أُزيلُ به الصَّدَى * فلا عيشَ إن لم اشرب الكَدِرَ الطَّرْقا
هُمُ الناسُ أَجبالٌ شوامخُ فى الذُّرَى * وأَوْديةٌ لا تَبلغ الأُكْمَ والبُرْقا
فسَكْرانُ يَسترقى ويَبْذُلُ بُسْلةً * وآخَرُ صاحى اللُّبِّ يَغْضَبُ أن يُرْقَى

(156)

سَوآءٌ هُجودى فى الدُّجَى وتهجُّدى * علىَّ اذا أَصْبحتُ غيرَ مُطيعِ
هُمُ الناسُ ضَرْبُ السيف لم يُغْنِ فيهمُ * ويَكفيك عَوْدَ السَّوْءِ ضَرْبُ قَطيعِ

١٥٥. ٦ O اوراق ايك. ٧ C لى for بى. ١٠ BCL يُسترقى. B ويَبْذُلُ. C ويبدلُ.

( 157 )

الحمدُ للّه أَضحى الناسُ فى عَجَبٍ * مستهتَرين بإفراطٍ وتَفْريطِ
والزَّنْدُ فى حُبّ أُسْوار يُسَوَّرُه * كالأُذْنِ فى حُبّ تشنيفٍ وتَقْريطِ
يَبغى الحُظوظَ اناسٌ من ظُبًى وقَنًا * وآخَرون بغَوْها بالمَشاريط
فجُدْ بعُرْف ولو بالنَّزْر محتسِبًا * إنّ القناطير تُحْوَى بالقَراريطِ

( 158 )

الى الله أَشكو مُهْجةً لا تُطيعنى * وعالَمَ سَوْءٍ ليس فيه رَشيدُ
حِجًى مثل مهجورِ المَنازلِ داثرٌ * وجهلٌ كمسكونِ الديارِ مَشيدُ

( 159 )

يَحْسُنُ مَرْأًى لبنى آدمٍ * وكلُّهم فى الذَّوْق لا يَعْذُبُ
ما فيهمُ بَرٌّ ولا ناسكٌ * إلّا الى نفْعٍ له يَجْذِبُ
أَفْضَلُ من افضلِهم صَخْرةٌ * لا تَظْلِمُ الناسَ ولا تَكْذِبُ

( 160 )

تَعالى اللهُ فهو بنا خبيرٌ * قد اضْطُرَّتْ الى الكَذِب العُقولُ
نقول على المَجاز وقد علمْنا * بأنّ الأمر ليس كما نَقولُ

( 161 )

لسان الفتى يُدْعَى سِنانًا وتارةً * حُساماً وكم من لفظة ضربتْ عُنْقا
لقد ورد الناسُ الحياةَ أَمامَنا * فما تركوا إلّا الأُجونةَ والرَّنْقا
وأَنْقَى سَوادَ الرأس دهرٌ وغاسلٌ * لِباسًا فأمّا سُوءُ طبْع فما أَنْقَى

( 162 )

لا حِسَّ للجسم بَعْدَ الروح نَعْلَمُهُ * فهل تُحِسُّ اذا بانت عن الجَسَدِ
والطبْعُ يَهْوى الى ما شانَ يَطلبه * لكن يُجَرُّ الى ما زانَ بالمَسَدِ
وفى الغرائز أَخْلاقٌ مذمَّمةٌ * فهل تُلام على النَّكْراء والحَسَدِ
أَهٰكذا كان اهلُ الارض قَبْلَكمُ * ام غُيّروا بسجايا منهمُ فُسُدِ

160. Z 38, 512.

( 163 )

لم تَلْقَ فى الايّام إلّا صاحبًا * تأْذَى به طولَ الحياةِ وتأْلَمُ
ويَعُدُّ كونَك فى الزمان بليّةً * فٱصبرْ لها فكذاك هذا العالَمُ

( 164 )

بنى الارضِ ما تحت التراب موفَّقٌ * لرُشْدٍ ولا فوق التراب سِوَى فَسْلِ
أَكان أَبوكم آدمٌ فى الذى أَتى * نجيبًا فتَرْجون النجابة للنَّسْلِ
أَسَكْنُ الثرى لا يبعثون رِسالةً * الينا ولستم سامعى كَلِمِ الرُّسْلِ

( 165 )

رُكوبُ النعْش وافَى بٱنتعاشِ * أَراحَ من التعثُّر رِجْلَ عاشى
الم تَعْجَبْ من الشيخ المعنَّى * يقوم على انحناءٍ وارتعاشِ
يكون عن الصلاة له قُعودٌ * ويمشى بالمَفاوز للمَعاشِ

( 166 )

أُرائيك فلْيَغفرْ لىَ اللهُ زَلّتى * بذاك ودينُ العالَمين رِئآءُ
وقد يُخْلِفُ الانسانُ ظنَّ عشيرهِ * وإن راق منه مَنْظَرٌ ورُؤَآءُ
اذا قومُنا لم يعبدوا الله وَحْدَهُ * بنُصْح فإنّا منهمُ بُرءَآءُ

( 167 )

أُنافقُ الناسَ إنّى قد بُليتُ بهم * وكيف لى بخلاضٍ منهمُ دانى
من عاش غيرَ مُداجٍ من يعاشره * اساءَ عِشْرةَ أَصحابٍ وأَخْدانِ
كم صاحب يتمنّى لو نُعيتُ له * وإن تشكّيتُ راعانى وفَدّانى

( 168 )

وما العُلَمآءُ والجُهّالُ إلّا * قريبٌ حينَ تنظُرُ من قَريبِ
متى ما يأْتِنى أَجَلى بأرضى * فنادِ على الجنازة للغَريبِ
أُكاشرُ من لَقِيتُ على حِذارٍ * وليس على ٱعتقادى من عَريبِ

165. Z 38, 500. ٢ CZ انتحاء, which BL give as a variant.

( 169 )

أَراهم يضحكون الىَّ غِشًّا * وتَغْشانى المَشاقِصُ والحِظآءُ
فلستُ لهم وإن قَربوا أَليفًا * كما لم تأتلفْ ذالٌ وظآءُ

( 170 )

من لىَ أن لا أُقيمَ فى بلدٍ * أُذكَرُ فيه بغير ما يَجِبُ
يُظَنُّ بى اليُسْرُ والديانةُ والـ * ـعِلْمُ وبينى وبينها حُجُبُ

* * *

أَقْررتُ بالجهل وٱدَّعَى فَهَمى * قومٌ فأَمرى وأَمرُهم عَجَبُ
والحقُّ أنّى وأنّهم هَدَرٌ * لستُ نجيبًا ولا هُمُ نُجُبُ
والحالُ ضاقت عن ضمّها جَسَدى * فكيف لى أن يضُمَّهُ الشَّجَبُ
ما أَوْسَعَ الموتَ يستريح به الـ * ـجسمُ المعنَّى ويَخْفِتُ اللَّجَبُ

( 171 )

وصفْتُك فٱبتهجتَ وقلتَ خيرًا * لتَجزيَنى فأَدركنى ٱبْتِهاجى
اذا كان التقارضُ من مُحالٍ * فأَحسنُ من تمادُحنا التَّهاجى

( 172 )

اذا أَثنى علىَّ المرءُ يومًا * بخيرٍ ليس فىَّ فذاك هاجى
وحقّى أن أُساءَ بما ٱفتراه * فلؤمٌ من غريزتىَ ٱبْتِهاجى

( 173 )

وما ذا يبتغى الجلسآءُ عندى * ارادوا مَنْطِقى وأَردتُ صَمْتى
ويُوجَد بيننا أَمَدٌ قصىٌّ * فأَمّوا سَمْتَهم وأَممتُ سَمْتى

( 174 )

يزورنى القومُ هذا أرضُهُ يَمَنٌ * من البلاد وهذا دارُهُ الطَّبَسُ
قالوا سمعْنا حديثًا عنك قلتُ لهم * لا يُبْعِدُ اللهُ إلّا مَعْشَرًا لَبَسوا

يبغون منّى مَيْنًا لستُ أُحْسِنُهُ * فإن صدقتُ عَرَتْهم أَوْجُهٌ عُبُسُ
أَعاننا اللهُ كُلَّ فى معيشته * يَلقى العَناءَ فدُرّى فوقنا دُبَسُ
ما ذا تريدون لا مالٌ تيسَّر لى * فيستماحَ ولا علمٌ فيُقْتَبَسُ
اتسألون جَهولًا أن يُفيدكمُ * وتَحلبون سَفيًّا ضَرْعُها يَبِسُ

* * *

أَنا الشقىُّ بأنّى لا أُطيقُ لكم * معونةَ وصُروفُ الدهر تَحْتَبِسُ

( 175 )

ان مازت الناسَ أَخلاقٌ يعاش بها * فانّهم عند سُوء الطبع أَسواءُ
لو كان كلّ بنى حوّاءَ يُشْبهنى * فبئسَ ما ولدتْ فى الخلق حَوّاءُ
بُعْدى من الناس بُرْءٌ من سَقامهمُ * وقُرْبهم للحِجَى والدّين إِدْواءُ
كالبَيْت أُفْرِدَ لا إِيطاءَ يُدركه * ولا سِنادٌ ولا فى اللفظ إِقواءُ

( 176 )

جِوارُ بنى الدنيا ضَنًى لىَ دائمٌ * تمنّيتُ لمّا شفّنى الغِبَّ والرِّبْعا
لقد فعلوا الخير القليل تكلّفًا * وجاءُوا الذى جاءوه من شرِّهم طَبْعا
فأين يَنابيعُ النَّدَى وبِحارُهُ * وهل أَبْقَت الايّامُ من أَسَدٍ ضَبْعا
اذا حُرّقتْ عِيدانُهم فأُلُوّةٌ * وإن عُجمتْ فى حادثٍ وُجدتْ نَبْعا

( 177 )

هذا طريقٌ للهُدَى لاحِبٌ * يرضى به المصحوبُ والصاحِبُ
أُهْرُبْ من الناس فان جئتَهم * فمثل سأْبٍ جرّهُ الساحِبُ
يَنتفع الناسُ بما عنده * وهو لَقًى بينهمُ شاحِبُ

174. ٣ C مبنًى for مينًا. ٥ BC فيستماحُ. The rhyme requires فيقتبسُ, but فتقتبِسوا would be as good rhyme and better grammar.

175. ٢ BLO او كان. O فى الدهر. ٣ BL أَدْوآءُ.

( 178 )

شاب علينا أَمْرَنا شائبٌ * وقد وَدِدْنا أنّه لم يَشُبْ
طُوبَى لطيرٍ تَلقط الحَبّةَ الـ * ـمُلقاةَ او وَحْشٍ تَقَفَّى العُشُبْ
لا تأْلَفُ الإِنْسَ ولا تَعرف الـ * ـقِنْسَ ولا تسمو اليها الأُشُبْ
فلا تَشُبَّ الحربَ وقّادةً * فخامدٌ فى نفْسه من يَشُبْ

( 179 )

اذا كُفّ صِلُّ أُفْعُوانٌ فما له * سِوَى بَيْته يَقْتاتُ ما عُمِّرَ التُّرْبا
ولو ذهبتْ عينا هِزَبْرٍ مساوِرٍ * لَما راع ضأْنًا فى المَراتع او سِرْبا
او ٱلتُمعتْ أنوارُ عَمْرٍو وعامرٍ * لَما حملا رُمْحًا ولا شَهِدا حَرْبا
يقولون هلّا تَشْهَدُ الجُمَعَ التى * رجَوْنا بها عَفْوًا من الله او قُرْبا
وهل لىَ خيرٌ فى الحُضور وانّما * أُزاحِمُ من أَخيارِهم إِبِلًا جُرْبا
لَعَمْرى لقد شاهدتُ عُجْمًا كثيرةً * وعُرْبًا فلا عُجْمًا حَمِدْتُ ولا عُرْبا
وللموت كأْسٌ تَكْرَهُ النفسُ شُرْبَها * ولا بُدَّ يومًا أن نكون لها شَرْبا
من السَّعْد فى دنياك أن يَهلك الفتى * بهَيْجآءَ يَغْشَى أَهلُها الطعنَ والضَّرْبا
فانّ قبيحًا بالمسوَّد ضَجْعةٌ * على فرْشه يشكو الى النَّفَر الكَرْبا
ولى شَرَقٌ بالحتْف ما هو مُغْرَبٌ * أَيَمَّمْتُ شَرْقًا فى المَسالك ام غَرْبا
تقنَّصَ فى الإِيوان أَملاكَ فارسٍ * وكم جاز بحرًا دون قَيْصَرَ او دَرْبا

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فيا ليت أنّى لم اكن فى بريّة * وإِلّا فوَحْشيًّا بإِحْدَى الأَمالِسِ
يُسوّف أَزهارَ الربيع تَعِلّةً * ويأْمَنُ فى البَيْداء شرَّ المُجالِسِ

.ضِجعة BL ٩ .لو التمعت C ٣ .عَمِرَ BL ١ .179

( 181 )

اذا حان يومى فلْأُوَسَّدْ بمَوْضعٍ * من الارض لم يَحفر به أَحدٌ قَبْرا
هُمُ الناسُ إن جازاهمُ اللهُ بالذى * توخَّوْه لم يَرحم جَهولًا ولا حَبْرا
يرى عَنَتًا فى قُرْب حيٍّ وميّتٍ * من الإنس من حلَّى سرائرَهم خُبْرا
فيا ليتنى لا أُشْهَدُ الحَشْرَ فيهمُ * اذا بُعثوا شُعْثًا رؤوسُهمُ غُبْرا
اذا تَمّ فيما تُؤنِسُ العَيْنُ مَضْجَعى * فزِدْنى هداك اللهُ من سَعةٍ شِبْرا
وإن سألوا عن مَذْهَبى فهو خَشْيةٌ * من الله لا طَوْقًا أَبُتُّ ولا جَبْرا

( 182 )

كأنّى وإن أَمْسَتْ تضُمّ جميعَنا * مدائنُ فى غُبْر المَهامِهِ بِيدِ
اذا قلتُ شعرًا لستُ فيه بحائبٍ * فما انا الّا تائبٌ كلَبِيدِ

( 183 )

اُنْفُضْ ثيابك من وُدّى ومعرفتى * فانّ شخصى هَبآءٌ فى الضُّحَى هابى
وقد نبذتُ على جَمْرٍ خبا يَبَسًا * فان يكن فيه سَقْطٌ يَذْكُ إلهابى
وقد نصحتُك فاحذرْ أن تُرَى أُذُنًا * تَرمى الى السَّهْب إكثارى وإسهابى

( 184 )

عَمَى العينِ يتلوهُ عَمَى الدينِ والهُدَى * فلَيْلتىَ القُصْوَى ثلاثُ لَيالى
وما أَزمتْ نفسى البنانَ على الّتى * اذا أَزمتْ عضّت بشَوْك سَيالِ
ولا قصّرتْ لى أُمُّ لَيْلَى بشُرْبها * حنادِسَ اوقاتٍ علىَّ طِيالِ
اذا ما اجتمعْنا هاجتِ الحُزْنَ أُلْفةٌ * محدِّثةٌ عن جَمْعنا بزِيالِ

* * *

وهوّن أَرْزآءَ الحوادث أَنّنى * وحيدٌ أُعانيها بغير عِيالِ
فدَعْنى وأهوالًا أُمارسُ ضَنْكَها * وإيّاك عنّى لا تَقِفْ بحِيالى

181. ٣ L جلّى. ٤ BL أَشْهَدُ. 184. ٢ الّتى probably refers to الدُّنْيا.

( 185 )

آليتُ ما مُثْرى الزمانِ وإن طغا * مُثْرٍ ولا مسعودُهُ مَسْعُودُ
ما سَرَّ غاوِيَنا الجَهولَ وانّما * هَتَفَ الحَمامُ به وناحَ العُودُ
كأساته المَلْأى وعَزْفُ قِيانه * للحادثاتِ بوارقٌ ورُعُودُ

( 186 )

أَغْنَى الأَنامِ تقىٌّ فى ذُرَى جبلٍ * يرضى القليلَ ويأبى الوَشْىَ والتّاجا
وأَفْقَرُ الناس فى دنياهمُ مَلِكٌ * يُضحى الى اللَّجِب الجرّارِ مُحْتاجا

( 187 )

اذا جولسَ الاقوامُ بالحقّ أَصبحوا * عُداةً فكلُّ الأَصفياءِ على خِبِّ
نشاهد بِيضًا من رجال كأنّهم * غَرابيبُ طيرٍ ساقطاتٍ على حَبِّ
اذا طَلبوا فاْقنعْ لتَظْفَرَ بالغِنَى * وإن نَطقوا فاْصمتْ لتَرجعَ باللُّبِّ
وإن لم تُطِقْ هِجْرانَ رَهْطك دائمًا * فمن أَدَبِ النفْس الزيارةُ عن غِبِّ
ويدعو الطبيبَ المرءُ وافاهُ حَيْنُهُ * رُوَيْدَكَ إنّ الأَمر جَلَّ عن الطِبِّ

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أَصُمْتَ الشُّهورَ فهلّا صَمِتَّ * ولا صومَ حتّى تُطيلَ الصُّموتا
يُلاقى الفتى عيشَهُ بالضلالِ * ويَبْقَى عليه الى أن يَموتا

( 189 )

اذا سكت الانسانُ قلّت خُصومُهُ * وإن أَضجعتْه الحادثاتُ لجَنْبِهِ
حسا طامرٌ فى صَمْته من دم الفتى * فصغَّر ذاك الصمتُ مُعْظَمَ ذَنْبِه
ولم يك فى حال البَعوض اذا شدا * له نَغَمٌ عالٍ وأَنتَ أَذٍ بِهِ
وإن سلّ سيفًا من كلام مسفَّهٌ * عليك فقابِلْه بصبْرك تُنْبِهِ

( 190 )

لسانُك عقربٌ فاذا أصابتْ * سِواك فأَنت اوّلُ من تُصيبُ
أَثِمْتَ بما جَنَتْهُ فمن شكاها * وَفَى لك من شكيّته نَصيبُ
أَتى الرجلَيْن عنها الشرُّ مَثْنَى * كِلا يومَيْكما شَئِزٌ عَصيبُ

( 191 )

ثيابىَ أَكفانى ورَمْسىَ مَنْزِلى * وعيشى حِمامى والمنيّةُ لى بَعْثُ
تَحَلَّىْ بأَسْنَى الحَلْيِ واجتلبى الغِنَى * فأَفضلُ من أَمثالِكِ النَّفَرُ الشُّعْثُ
يسيرون بالأَقْدام فى سُبُل الهُدَى * الى الله حَزْنٌ ما تَوَطَّأْنَ او وَعْثُ
وما فى يدٍ قُلْبٌ ولا أَسْؤُقٍ بُرًى * ولا مَفْرَقٍ تاجٌ ولا أُذُنٍ رَعْثُ

( 192 )

لك المُلْكُ إن تُنْعِمْ فذاك تفضّلٌ * علىَّ وان عاقبتَنى فبواجِبِ
يقوم الفتى من قَبْره إن دعوتَهُ * وما جرَّ مخطوطٌ له فى الرَّواجِبِ
عصا النُّسُكِ أَحْمَى ثَمَّ من رُمْح عامرٍ * وأَشْرَفُ عند الفَجْر من قَوْس حاجِبِ

( 193 )

صَحِبْتُ الحياةَ وطال العَناءُ * ولا خيرَ فى العيش مُسْتَصْحَبا
وقد كنتُ فيما مضى جامحًا * ومن راضَهُ دهرُهُ أَصْحَبا
متى ما شَحَبْتَ لوَجْهِ المليكِ * كُسيتَ جمالاً بأن تَشْحُبا
حبا الشيخُ لا طامعًا فى النُّهوضِ * نَقيضَ الصّبىّ اذا ما حَبا
ولم يَحْبُنى احدٌ نِعْمةً * ولكنّ مَوْلَى المَوالى حَبا
نصحتُك فاعملْ له دائبًا * وإن جاءَ موتٌ فقلْ مَرْحَبا

( 194 )

تنسّكتَ بعد الأَربعين ضرورةً * ولم يَبْقَ إلّا أن تقومَ الصَّوارِخُ
فكيف تُرجّى أن تُثابَ وانّما * يرى الناسُ فضْل النُّسْك والمرءُ شارِخُ

واجتلبى O ٢ .191

( 195 )

حورفتُ فی کلّ مطلوب هَممتُ به * حتّی زَهِدْتُ فما خُلّیتُ والزُّهُدا
فالحمدُ لله صابی ما یزایلنی * ولستُ أَصْدُقُ إن سمّیتُهُ شُهُدا
وما اظنُّ جِنانَ الخُلد یُدرکها * إلّا معاشرُ کانوا فی التُّقَی جُهُدا
یمضی النهارُ فما أَنفکُّ فی شُغُلٍ * ولا أُطیقُ اذا جَنَّ الدُّجَی سُهُدا
امّا المِهادُ فجَنْبی فیه مُضطجِعٌ * والدینُ عند جُنوبٍ تَهْجُرُ المُهُدا

( 196 )

اِرکَعْ لرَبّك فی نهارك واسْجُدِ * ومتی أَطَقْتَ تهجّدًا فتَهَجَّدِ
واذا غلا البُرُّ النقیُّ فشارِكِ الـ * ـفَرَسَ الکریمَ وساوِ طِرْفَك تَمْجُدِ
واجعلْ لنفسك من سَلیطِ ضِیآءِها * أُدْمًا ونَزْرَ حلاوةٍ من عُنْجُدِ
وارْسُمْ بفَخّارٍ شرابَك لا تُرِدْ * قَدَحَ اللُّجَیْن ولا إناءَ العَسْجَدِ
یکفیك صَیْفَكَ من ثیابك ساترٌ * واذا شَتَوْتَ فقِطْعةٌ من بُرْجُدِ
أَنْهاك أن تَلِیَ الحُکومةَ او تُرَی * حِلْفَ الخِطابة او إمامَ المَسْجِدِ
وذَرِ الإمارةَ واتّخاذَك دِرّةً * فی المِصْر تَحْسِبُها حُسامَ المُنْجِدِ
تلك الأُمورُ کَرِهْتُها لأَقارِبٍ * وأَصادِقٍ فادْخَلْ بنفسك او جُدِ
ولقد وجدتُ وَلاءَ قوم سُبّةً * فاصْرِفْ ولاءَك للقدیم المُوجِدِ
ولْتَحْلَ عِرْسُك بالتُّقَی فنِظامُهُ * أَسْنَی لها من لُؤلُؤٍ وزَبَرْجَدِ
کلٌّ یسبّح فافْهَمِ التقدیسَ فی * صَوْت الغُراب وفی صِیاح الجُدْجُدِ
وانْزِلْ بعِرْضك فی أَعَزِّ مَحَلّةٍ * فالغَوْرُ لیس بمَوْطِنٍ للمُنْجِدِ

( 197 )

غدوتَ مریضَ العقلِ والدینِ فالْقَنی * لتَسْمَعَ أَنْبآءَ الأُمور الصَّحائحِ
فلا تأْکُلنْ ما أَخْرَجَ المآءُ ظالمًا * ولا تَبْغِ قوتًا من غَریض الذَّبائحِ

196. S 95.

197. 1 BCL غدوتُ.

وأَبْيَضِ أُمّاتٍ أَرادت صَريحَهُ * لأَطفالها دون الغوانى الصَّرائحِ
ولا تَفجعنّ الطيرَ وهى غوافلٌ * بما وَضعتْ فالظلمُ شرُّ القَبائحِ
ودعْ ضَرَبَ النحْلِ الذى بكرتْ له * كواسبَ من أَزهار نَبْتٍ فَوائحِ
فما أَحرزتْه كى يكونَ لغيرها * ولا جمعتْه للنَّدَى والمَنائحِ
مسحتُ يدى من كلّ هذا فلَيْتنى * أَبَهْتُ لشأنى قَبْلَ شَيْب المَسائحِ
بنى زَمَنى هل تَعلمون سرائرًا * عَلِمْتُ ولكنّى بها غيرُ بائحِ
سَرَيْتم على غىٍّ فهلّا ٱهتديتمُ * بما خبَّرتْكم صافياتُ القَرائحِ
وصاحَ بكم داعى الضلالِ فما لكم * أَجَبْتم على ما خَيَّلَتْ كُلَّ صائحِ
متى ما كُشفتم عن حقائق دينكم * تكشَّفتمُ عن مُخزياتِ الفَضائحِ
فان تُرْشَدوا لا تَخضِبوا السيف من دمٍ * ولا تُلْزِموا الأَميالَ سَبْرَ الجَرائحِ
ويُعْجِبنى دأْبُ الذين ترهَّبوا * سِوَى أَكْلهم كَدَّ النفوسِ الشَّحائحِ
وأَطْيَبُ منهم مَطْعَمًا فى حياته * سُعاةُ حَلالٍ بين غادٍ ورائحِ
فما حَبَسَ النفْسَ المَسيحُ تعبّدًا * ولكن مشى فى الارض مِشْيةَ سائحِ
يُغيّبُنى فى التُّرب من هو كارهٌ * اذا لم يُغيّبْنى كريهُ الروائحِ
ومن يتوقَّى أن يجاوِرَ أَعْظُمًا * كأَعظُم تلك الهالكات الطَّرائحِ
ومن شرِّ أَخلاق الأَنيس وفِعْلِهم * خُوارُ النواعى وٱلتدامُ النّوائحِ
وأَصْفَحُ عن ذَنْب الصَّديق وغيره * لسُكْنايَ بيتَ الحقّ بين الصَّفائحِ
وأَزْهَدُ فى مدْح الفتى عند صِدْقه * فكيف قَبولى كاذباتِ المَدائحِ
وما زالت النفْسُ اللَّجوجُ مطيّةً * الى أن غَدَتْ إِحْدَى الرَّذايا الطَّلائحِ
وما ينفعُ الانسانَ أنّ غمائمًا * تَسُحُّ عليه تحت إِحْدَى الضَّرائحِ
ولو كان فى قُرْبٍ من الماء رَغبةٌ * لنافَسَ ناسٌ فى قُبور البَطائحِ

197. ٣ BCL ولا بَيْضَ امّاتٍ. O وابيضُ. K (the text published by I Krachkovsky: see p. 134 *supra*) وأَبْيَضَ. ٥ BCL كواسبُ. ٨ K علمتُ بها لكنّنى. ١٠ BC مَشْيةَ.

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فكّروا فى الأُمور يُكْشَفْ لكم بعـــضُ الذى تَجهَلون بالتَّفْكيرِ
لو درى الطائرُ الموكّرُ بالعُقـــبَى أَبَى أن يَهُمَّ بالتَّوْكيرِ
حرَّق الهِنْدُ من يموتُ فما زاروهُ فى رَوْحةٍ ولا تَبْكيرِ
واستراحوا من ضَغْطة القبر مَيْتًا * وسُؤالٍ لمُنْكَرٍ ونَكيرِ
ه لا ذُكورٌ ولا إناثٌ من العالَم يُهْدَى للرُّشْد بالتَّذْكيرِ

( 199 )

واذا افتكرتُ فما يَهيجُ تفكُّرى * فيما أُكابِدُ غيرَ لَوْم الناجِلِ
وأَرَحْتُ أَوْلادى فهُمْ فى نِعْمة الـــعَدَم التى فَضَلَتْ نَعيمَ العاجِلِ
ولَوَ انّهم ظهروا لعانَوْا شِدّةً * تَرْميهِمِ فى مُتلِفاتِ هَواجِلِ

( 200 )

الحُكمُ للّه فانْبثْ مُفْرَدًا ابدًا * ولا تكن بصُنوف الناس مُخْتَلِطا
ولستُ ادرى سِوَى أنّى ارى رجلًا * يَرُبُّ نَسْلًا لرَيْب الدهرِ قد غَلِطا

( 201 )

ومَحاسنُ الدنيا الأَنيسُ وانّما * أَشباحُ سادِتِهم أَهِلّةُ أَشْهُرِ
واذا أَردتم للبنين كرامةً * فالحَزْمُ أَجْمَعُ تَرْكُهم فى الأَظْهُرِ

( 202 )

يَشْقَى الوليدُ ويشقى والداهُ به * وفاز من لم يُوَلِّهْ عقلَه وَلَدُ
اذا تلبَّسَ بالشُّجْعان جبَّنهم * وبالكرام أَسَرّوا الضِّنَّ او صَلَدُوا

( 203 )

على الوُلْدِ يَجنى والدٌ ولَوَ انّهم * ولاةٌ على أَمصارهم خُطَبآءُ
وزادَك بُعْدًا من بنيك وزادَهم * عليك حُقودًا أَنّهم نُجَبآءُ
يَرون ابًا أَلْقاهمُ فى مؤرِّبٍ * من العَقْدِ ضلّتْ حَلَّهُ الأُرَبآءُ

202. تكبّس O ٢.  203. Z 29, 308.

199. S 102.

( 204 )

تواصلَ حَبْلُ النَّسْل ما بين آدمٍ * وبيني ولم يُوصَلْ بلامىَ بآءِ
تثاءَبَ عمرٌو اذ تثاءَبَ خالدٌ * بعَدْوَى فما أَعْدَتْنىَ الثُّؤَبآءِ

( 205 )

انّما نحن فى ضلالٍ وتعليـــــلٍ فان كنتَ ذا يقينٍ فهاتِهْ
ولحُبّ الصحيح آثرَت الرُّومُ آنتسابَ الفتى الى أُمَّهاتِهْ
جَهِلُوا مَنْ أَبُوهُ إلّا ظُنونًا * وطَلا الوحْشِ لاحقٌ بمَهاتِهْ

( 206 )

اذا تفكّرتَ فِكْرًا لا يمازِجُهُ * فَسادُ عقلٍ صحيحٍ هان ما صَعُبا
فاللُّبُّ ان صحَّ أَعْطَى النفسَ فَتْرتَها * حتّى تموتَ وسمَّى جِدَّها لَعِبا
وما الغوانى الغوادى فى مَلاعبها * إلّا خَيالاتُ وقتٍ أَشْبهتْ لُعَبا
زيادةُ الجسم عَنّتْ جسمَ حامِلِهِ * الى التراب وزادت حافرًا تَعَبا

( 207 )

نهانىَ عقلى عن أُمورٍ كثيرةٍ * وطبْعى اليها بالغريزة جاذِبى
وممّا أَدامَ الرُّزْءَ تكذيبُ صادقٍ * على خُبْرةٍ منّا وتصديقُ كاذِبِ

( 208 )

خُذوا فى سبيل العقل تُهْدَوْا بهَدْيهِ * ولا يَرْجُوَنْ غيرَ المُهَيْمِنِ راجى
ولا تُطْفِئوا نورَ المليك فانّه * مُمَتِّعُ كُلٍّ من حِجًى بسِراجِ
ارى الناسَ فى مجهولةٍ كُبَرآءهم * كوِلْدانِ حيٍّ يَلعَبون خَراجِ

( 209 )

جآءت احاديثُ إن صحَّت فانّ لها * شأنًا ولكنَّ فيها ضَعْفَ إسْنادِ
فشاوِرِ العقلَ وآترُكْ غيرَهُ هَدَرًا * فالعقلُ خيرُ مُشيرٍ ضمَّهُ النادى

204. Z 29, 307.

( 210 )

وزهَّدنى فى هَضْبة المجْد خُبْرتى * بأنّ قَراراتِ الرجال وُهودُ
كأنّ كُهول القوم أَطفالُ أَشْهُرٍ * تناغتْ وأَكوار القِلاص مُهودُ
اذا حُدّثوا لم يَفهموا واذا دُعوا * اجابوا وفيهم رقدةٌ وسُهودُ
لهم مَنْصَبُ الإِنْس المُبينِ وانّما * على العِيسِ منهم بالنَّعاس فُهودُ

( 211 )

وقد عُدِمَ التيقُّنُ فى زمان * حَصَلْنا من حِجاهُ على التَّظَنّى
فقلْنا للهِزَبْر أَأَنت ليثٌ * فشكَّ وقال عَلّى او كأَنّى

( 212 )

اذا مرَّ أَعْمَى فارحموه وأَيْقِنوا * وإن لم تُكَفُّوا أنّ كُلَّكُمُ أَعْمَى

* * *

غدوتُ لابنَ وقتى ما تقضَّى نسيتُهُ * وما هو آتٍ لا أُحِسُّ له طَعْما
وقال أُناسٌ ما لأَمْرٍ حقيقةٌ * فهل أَثبتوا أن لا شقاءَ ولا نُعْمَى
فنحن وهمْ فى مَزْعَم وتشاجرٍ * ويعلمُ رَبُّ الناس أَكْذَبَنا زَعْما

( 213 )

هل صحَّ قولٌ من الحاكى فنقبَلَهُ * ام كلُّ ذاك أَباطيلٌ وأَسْمارُ
امّا العُقولُ فآلتْ أنّه كَذِبٌ * والعقل غَرْسٌ له بالصِّدْق إِثْمارُ

( 214 )

انّ التَّجارِبَ طيرٌ تأْلَفُ الخَمَرا * يَصيدُها من أَفادَ اللُّبَّ والعُمُرا
كم جُزتُ شهرًا وكم جَرّمتُ من سَنةٍ * وما أَرانىَ إلّا جاهلًا غُمُرا
والغىُّ كالنجم عُرْيانًا بلا سُتُرٍ * وللحُقوقِ وُجوهٌ أُلْبِسَتْ خُمُرا
أَلا سفينةَ او عِبْرًا أُمُدُّ له * كفّى فأَنجُوَ من شرّ لها غَمُرا

210. ٤ C على العيش.

212. ٣ L in marg. فما اثبتوا يومًا شقاء ولا نعما. After *v.* ٣ L adds the following verse:

وشَكَّكَ فى الايجاب والنفى معشرٌ * حَيارَى جرت خَيْلُ الضلال بهم سَعْما

(215)

لا يَعلم الشَّرْىُ ما أَلْقَى مرارتَهُ * اليه والأَرْىُ لم يَشعرْ وقد عَذُبا
سألتمونى فأَعْيَتْنى إجابتُكم * مَنِ ٱدَّعَى أنّه دارٍ فقد كَذَبا

(216)

اصبحتُ فى يومى أُسائِلُ عن غدى * متحيّرًا عن حاله مُتَنَدِّسا
امّا اليقينُ فلا يقينَ وانّما * أَقْصَى ٱجتهادىَ أن أَظُنَّ وأَحْدِسا

(217)

قالت معاشرُ كُلُّ عاجزٌ ضَرَعُ * ما للخلائقِ لا بُطءٌ ولا سِرَعُ
مدبَّرون فلا عَتْبٌ اذا خَطئوا * على المُسىءِ ولا حَمْدٌ اذا بَرَعوا
وقد وجدتُ لهذا القول فى زمنى * شواهدًا ونهانى دونَهُ الوَرَعُ
* * *
يَسْعَوْنَ فى المَنْهَج المسلوك قد سُبِقوا * الى الذى هو عند الغِرّ مُخْتَرَعُ
ه أَبكارُ هذى المعانى ثَيِّباتُ حِجًى * فى كلّ عصرٍ لها جانٍ ومُفْتَرِعُ

(218)

أَأَخْرُجُ من تحت هذى السمآءِ * فكيف الإباقُ وأين المَفَرْ
وكم عشتُ من سنةٍ فى الزمانِ * وجاوزتُ من رَجَبٍ او صَفَرْ
وما جُعلتْ لأُسود العَرينِ * أَظافيرُ إلّا ٱبتغآء الظَّفَرْ
لَحَى اللهُ قومًا اذا جئتُهم * بصِدْقِ الاحاديث قالوا كَفَرْ

(219)

اذا كان ما قال الحكيمُ فما خَلا * زمانىَ منّى منذ كان ولا يَخلُو
أُفَرَّقُ طَوْرًا ثمّ أُجْمَعُ تارةً * ومثلىَ فى حالاته السِّدْرُ النَّخْلُ

219. Z 38, 510.

( 220 )

يَجوز أن تَطْفَأَ الشمسُ التى وَقَدَتْ * من عهد عادٍ وأَذكى نارَها المَلِكُ
فان خَبَتْ فى طَوال الدهر حُمْرتُها * فلا مَحالةَ من أن يُنْقَضَ الفَلَكُ
مضى الانامُ فلولا عِلْمُ حاكِمِهِمْ * لقلتُ قولَ زُهَيْرٍ أَيّةً سَلَكُوا
فى المُلك لم يَخرجوا عنه ولا ٱنتقلوا * منه فكيف اعتقادى أنّهم هَلَكُوا

( 221 )

آليتُ لا ينفكُّ جسمىَ فى أَذًى * حتّى يَعودِ الى قديم العُنْصُرِ
واذا رجعتُ اليه صارت أَعْظُمى * تُربًا تَهافَتُ فى طَوال الأَعْصُرِ

( 222 )

تَيَمَّموا بتُرابى عَلَّ فِعْلَكُمُ * بعد الهُمودِ يُوافينى بأَغْراضى
وإن جُعلتُ بحُكم الله فى خَزَفٍ * يَقْضى الطَّهورَ فإنّى شاكرٌ راضى
جواهرٌ أَلّفتْها قدرةٌ عَجَبٌ * وزايلتْها فصارتْ مثلَ أَعْراضِ

( 223 )

كم يَنْظِمُ الدهرُ من عِقْدٍ ويَنْثُره * وليس عِقْدُ ثُرَيّاهُ بمُنْتَثِرِ
وطال وقتٌ على ماضٍ فغادَرَهُ * بلا جِهارٍ ولا أَثْرٍ ولا أُثُرِ

( 224 )

العالَمُ العالى برأْى مَعاشرٍ * كالعالم الهاوى يُحِسُّ ويَعْلَمُ
زعمتْ رجالٌ أنّ سيّاراتِهِ * تَسِقُ العُقولَ وأنّها تَتَكَلَّمُ
فهَلِ الكواكبُ مثلنا فى دينها * لا يتّفقْنَ فهائدٌ او مُسْلِمُ
ولعلّ مَكّةَ فى السماءِ كمكّةٍ * وبها نَضادٍ ويَذْبُلٌ ويَلَمْلَمُ
والنورُ فى حُكم الخواطر مُحْدَثٌ * والاوّلىُّ هو الزمانُ المُظْلِمُ

220. S 100. ٣ BL فلولا عِلْمُ حالِهِمُ.
221. ٢ BL طِوال.
223. ١ C لم ينظم. ٢ O جهاز.

والخيرُ بين الناس رَسْمٌ داثرٌ * والشرُّ نَهْجٌ والبريّةُ مَعْلَمُ
طبعٌ خُلقتَ عليه ليس بزائلٍ * طولَ الحياةِ وآخَرٌ مُتَعَلَّمُ
ان جارت الأُمرآءُ جآءَ مؤمَّرٌ * أَعْتَى وأَجْوَرُ يستضيم ويَكْلِمُ
كحمائمٍ ظَلَمَتْ فنادَى أَجْدَلٌ * إن كنتِ ظالمةً فإنّى أَظْلَمُ
أَرأيتَ أَظفار الضراغم عُوّدتْ * فِرةً وأَظفار الأنيس تُقَلَّمُ
وكذاك حُكمُ الدهر فى سُكّانه * عَيْرٌ له أُذُنٌ وهَيْقٌ أَصْلَمُ
إن شئتَ أن تُكْفَى الحِمامَ فلا تَعِشْ * هذى الحياةُ الى المنيّة سُلَّمُ

( 225 )

اِسْتَحْيِ من شمس النهارِ ومن * قمرِ الدُّجَى ونُجومهِ الزُّهْرِ
يجرين فى الفَلَك المُدارِ بإِذْن الله لا يَخشَيْنَ من بُهْرِ
ولهنّ بالتعظيم فى خَلَدى * أَوْلَى وأَجْدَرُ من بنى فِهْرِ
سُبْحانَ خالقِهنَّ لستُ أَقولُ الشُّهْبُ كابيةٌ مع الدَّهْرِ
لا بل أُفَكّرُ هل رُزقنَ حِجًى * نَجَسًا يَمِزْنَ به من الطُّهْرِ
ام هل لأُنْثاها الحصانِ بذى الـ * ـتذكير من قُرْبَى ومن صِهْرِ

* * *

فبَرِئْتُ من غاوٍ اخى سفهٍ * متمرّد فى السرّ والجَهْرِ
أَلْغَى صلاةَ العَصْر محتقِرًا * ورَمَى ورآءَ الظَّهْر بالظُّهْرِ
فآمنَحْ ضَعيفَك إن عَراك ولو * نَزْرًا ولا تَصْرِفْه بالكَهْرِ
وآرفعْ له شَقْراءَ تَرْمَحُ فى * دَهْماءَ مثلَ تأَرُّن المُهْرِ

( 226 )

أَرى الخلقَ فى أَمرَيْن ماضٍ ومُقْبِلٍ * وظَرْفَيْن ظرفَىْ مُدّةٍ ومَكانِ
اذا ما سألْنا عن مُرادِ إِلٰهنا * كَنَى عن بيانٍ فى الإِجابة كانى

224. ٦ O معلم فى البريّة. B مُعْلَمُ. 225. ٧ BL فبرئتَ.
226. Z 38, 524.

( 227 )

امّا المكانُ فثابتٌ لا ينطوى * لكن زمانُك ذاهبٌ لا يَثْبُتُ
قال الغوىُّ لقد كَبَتَّ مُعاندى * خَسِرَتْ يداهُ بأىّ أَمْرٍ يَكْبتُ
والمرءُ مثلُ النار شُبّتْ وٱنتهتْ * فخَبَتْ وأَفْلَتَ فى الحياة المُخْبِتُ

* * *

ان كانت الأَحبارُ تُعْظِمُ سَبْتَها * فأَخو البصيرة كُلَّ يوم مُسْبِتُ

( 228 )

أَرى الناس شرًّا من زمانٍ حواهُمُ * فهل وُجدتْ للعالَمين حَقائقُ
وقد كَذبوا عن ساعةٍ ودقيقةٍ * وما كَذبتْ ساعاتُهم والدَّقائقُ

( 229 )

أَركانُ دنيانا غرائزُ أَرْبَعٍ * جُعلتْ لمن هو فوقَنا أَرْكانا
والله صيَّر للبلاد وأَهْلها * ظرفَيْن وقتًا ذاهبًا ومَكانا
والدهرُ لا يدرى بما هو كائنٌ * فيه فكيف يُلامُ فيما كانا

* * *

نَبكى ونَضحكُ والقضاءُ مسلَّطٌ * ما الدهرُ أَضْحَكَنا ولا أَبْكانا
٥ نشكو الزمانَ وما أتى بجنايةٍ * ولوِ ٱستطاع تكلُّمًا لَشَكانا
متواقفين على المَظالم رُكّبتْ * فينا وقارَبَ شرَّنا أَزْكانا

( 230 )

اذا قيل غال الدهرُ شيئًا فانّما * يُراد إِلٰهُ الدهر والدهرُ خادِمُ
ومَوْلِدُ هذى الشمس أَعْياك حَدُّهُ * وخبَّر لُبٌّ أنّه مُتَقادِمُ
وأَيْسَرُ كَوْنٍ تحته كُلُّ عالَمٍ * ولا تُدْرِكُ الأَكوانَ جُرْدٌ صَلادِمُ
اذا هى مرّتْ لم تَعُدْ وورآءها * نظائرُ والأَوقاتُ ماضٍ وقادِمُ

227. Z 30, 51.
229. Z 38, 522. ١ Z اربعٌ. O فوقها. ٣ BCL بمن هو كائن.

٥ فما آب منها بَعْدَ ما غاب غائبٌ * ولا يَعْدَمُ الحينَ المجدَّدَ عادِمُ
كأنّك أَودَعْتَ التماثيلَ أَنْفُسًا * وأَنْتَ على التفريط فى ذاك نادِمُ
وما آدَمٌ فى مَذْهَب العقل واحدًا * ولكنّهُ عند القِياس أَوادِمُ
تخالفَتِ الأَغْراضُ ناسٍ وذاكرٌ * وسالٍ ومشتاقٌ وبانٍ وهادِمُ

( 231 )

اللهُ صوَّرنى ولستُ بعالمٍ * لِمَ ذاك سُبحانَ القدير الواحِدِ
فلْتَشْهَدِ الساعاتُ والأَنفاسُ لى * أنّى بَرئتُ من الغوىّ الجاحِدِ

( 232 )

مَوْلاك مولاك الذى ما له * نِدٌّ وخابَ الكافرُ الجاحِدُ
آمِنْ به والنَّفْسُ تَرْقَى وإن * لم يَبْقَ إلّا نَفَسٌ واحِدُ
ترجو بذاك العفوَ منه اذا * أُلحدتَ ثمّ انصرف اللاحِدُ

( 233 )

اذا كنتَ من فرْط السفاه معطِّلًا * فيا جاحدُ اشهَدْ أنّنى غير جاحِدِ
أَخافُ من الله العقوبة آجلًا * وأَزعمُ انّ الامر فى يد واحِدِ

( 234 )

عَجَبى للطبيب يُلْحِدُ فى الخالق من بعدِ دَرْسِهِ التَّشْريحا
ولقد عُلِّمَ المنجّمُ ما يُوجِبُ للدين أن يكونَ صَريحا
من نُجومٍ ناريّةٍ ونجومٍ * ناسبتْ تُربةً ومآءً وريحا
فَطِنُ الحاضرين من يَفهمُ التعـ * ـريضَ حتّى يظنُّهُ تَصْريحا

230. ٥ C آل for آب.
232. ٣ B تَرْجُ.
233. S 94.
234. ٤ BL يَظُنَّه.

( 235 )

قلتمْ لنا خالقٌ حكيمٌ * قلْنا صَدقتمْ كذا نَقُولُ
زعمتموهُ بـلا مكانٍ * ولا زمـانٍ أَلا فَقُولـوا
هذا كلامٌ له خَبىٌّ * مَعْناهُ ليست لنا عُقُولُ

( 236 )

لا ذَنْبَ للدنيا فكيف نلومها * واللَّوْمُ يَلحقنى وأهلَ نُحاسى
عِنَبٌ وخَمْرٌ فى الإِناءِ وشاربٌ * فمن الملومُ أَعاصرٌ أَمْ حاسى

( 237 )

ان كان من فَعَلَ الكبائر مُجْبَرًا * فعِقابُهُ ظُلْمٌ على ما يَفْعَلُ
واللهُ اذ خَلَقَ المَعادنَ عالمٌ * أنّ الحِداد البِيضَ منها تُجْعَلُ
سَفَكَ الدمآءَ بها رجالٌ أَعْصموا * بالخَيْل تُلْجَمُ بالحَديد وتُنْعَلُ

( 238 )

لولا التنافُسُ فى الدنيا لَما وُضعتْ * كُتُبُ التناظُرِ لا المُغْنى ولا العُمَدُ
قد بالغوا فى كلام بانَ زُخْرُفُهُ * يُوهى العُيونَ ولم تَثْبُتْ له عَمَدُ
وما يزالون فى شأمٍ وفى يَمَنٍ * يستنبطون قياسًا ما له أَمَدُ
فذَرْهُمُ ودناياهم فقد شُغلوا * بها ويَكفيك منها القادر الصَّمَدُ

( 239 )

ان هلَّلتْ أَفواهُكم فقُلوبُكم * ونُفوسُكم دونَ الحُقوقِ مُهَلِّلَهْ
آليتُ ما تَوْراتُكُمْ بمُنيرةٍ * إن أُلفيتْ فيها الكُمَيْتُ مُحَلَّلَهْ

* * *

هَفَت الحَنيفةُ والنَّصارَى ما اهْتَدَتْ * ويَهودُ حارت والمَجوسُ مُضَلَّلَهْ
اِثنانِ أَهْلُ الارض ذو عقلٍ بلا * دينٍ وآخَرُ دَيِّنٌ لا عَقْلَ لَهْ

235. Z 38, 512.
237. Z 38, 513.
238. ١ LO العُمُدُ.
239. Z 38, 513.

( 240 )

قُلْ للمُدامة وهى ضِدٌّ للنُّهَى * تَنْضو لها ابدًا سُيوفُ مُحارِبِ
لو كان لم يَحْظُرْكِ غيرَ أَذيّةٍ * شىءٌ لَبِتِّ مُباحةً للشارِبِ
لكن حَماكِ العقلُ وهو مؤمَّرٌ * فآنْأَىْ ورآءِكِ فى التراب التارِبِ

( 241 )

يقول الناسُ إنّ الخمر تُودى * بما فى الصدْر من هَمٍّ قَديمِ
ولولا أنّها بالـلُّبّ تُودى * لكنتُ أَخا المُدامةِ والنَّديمِ

( 242 )

علَيْكَ العقلَ وآفْعَلْ ما رآهُ * جميلًا فهو مُشتارُ الشِّوارِ
ولا تَقْبَلْ من التَّوْراة حُكمًا * فانّ الحقّ عنها فى تَوارى

( 243 )

ضلّتْ يهودُ وانّما تَوْراتُها * كَذِبٌ من العلمآء والأَحْبارِ
قد أَسْندوا عن مثْلهم ثمّ آعتَلَوْا * فنَمَوْا بإِسْنادٍ الى الجَبّارِ
واذا غَلبتَ مناضلًا عن دينه * أَلْقَى مَقالدَهُ الى الأَخْبارِ

( 244 )

بَنَت النَّصارَى للمَسيح كنائسًا * كادت تَعيبُ الفِعْلَ من مُنْتابِها
ومتى ذكرتُ محمّدًا وكِتابَهُ * جاءتْ يَهودُ بجَحْدها وكِتابِها

* * *

أَفمِلّةَ الإِسلام يُنْكِرُ مُنْكِرٌ * وقضآءُ ربّك صاغَها وأَتَى بِها
اينَ الهُدَى فنرومَهُ بمَشَقّةٍ * فى البِيد ساطيةٍ على مُجْتابِها

240. ١ BC سيوفَ. L سيوفُ.

( 245 )

أَزولُ وليس فى الخلّاق شَكٌّ * فلا تَبْكُوا علىَّ ولا تُبَكُّوا
خُذوا سِيَرى فهُنَّ لكم صَلاحٌ * وصَلُّوا فى حياتكُمُ وزَكُّوا
ولا تُصْغوا الى أَخبار قومٍ * يُصَدِّقُ مَيْنَها العقلُ الأَرَكُّ
ارى عَمَلًا كَلا عَمَلٍ وكَوْنًا * يجرُّ فسادَهُ قَدَرٌ مِصَكُّ
وأَسطارًا تُمَثَّلُ فوق طِرْسٍ * وتَطْمِسُ بعد ذلك او تُحَكُّ

( 246 )

وقد شَهِدَ النَّصارَى أنّ عيسى * توخَّتْهُ اليهودُ لِيَصْلِبوهُ
وما أَبَهوا وقد جعلوه رَبًّا * لِئَلّا يَنْقُصوه ويَجْدِبوهُ
تَمُجُّ قُلوبُهم ما أُودِعَتْهُ * لسُوءٍ فى الغرائز أُشْرِبوهُ

( 247 )

عَجَبًا للمسيح بين أُناسٍ * وإلى غير والدٍ نَسَبوهُ
أَسلمتْهُ الى اليَهود النَّصارَى * وأَقرّوا بأَنّهم صَلَبوهُ
يُشفِقُ الحازمُ اللبيبُ على الطفـ * ـلِ اذا ما لِداتُهُ ضَرَبوهُ
واذا كان ما يقولون فى عيـ * ـسَى صحيحًا فأينَ كان أَبوهُ
كيف خَلَّى وليدَهُ للأَعادى * ام يظنّون أنّهم غَلَبوهُ

( 248 )

قالت معاشرُ لم يَبعث إِلٰهُكُمُ * الى البريّة عيساها ولا مُوسَى
وانّما جعلوا للقوم مأكلةً * وصيَّروا لجميع الناس نامُوسا
ولو قدرتُ لعاقبتُ الذين طَغَوْا * حتّى يعودَ حليفُ الغىّ مَرْمُوسا

245. ٤ C امرًا for كونًا. 247. ١ C وإلى الله والدٍ.
248. ٢ O الرحمان for للقوم. O وصيّروا دينهم للملك.

( 249 )

اذا كان عِلْمُ الناس ليس بنافعٍ * ولا دافعٍ فالخُسْرُ للعُلَمآءِ
قضى اللهُ فينا بالذى هو كائنٌ * فتَمَّ وضاعت حِكْمةُ الحُكَمآءِ
وهل يأْبِقُ الانسانُ من مُلْك رَبّه * فيَخْرُجَ من ارضٍ له وسمآءِ
سنَتبعُ آثارَ الذين تحمَّلوا * على ساقةٍ من أَعْبُدٍ وإِمآءِ
لقد طال فى هذا الانام تعجُّبى * فيا لَرِوآءٍ قوبلوا بظِمآءِ
أُرامى فتُشْوى مَنْ أُعاديهِ أَسْهُمى * وما صافَ عنّى سَهْمُهُ برِمآءِ

* * *

أَفيقوا أَفيقوا يا غُواةُ فانّما * دياناتكم مَكْرٌ من القُدَمآءِ
أَرادوا بها جَمْعَ الحُطام فأَدركوا * وبادوا وماتت سُنّةُ اللُّؤَمآءِ

( 250 )

مَسيحيّةٌ من قَبْلها مُوسَويّةٌ * حكتْ لك أَخبارًا بعيدًا ثُبوتُها
وفارسُ قد شَبَّتْ لها النارَ وادَّعتْ * لنيرانها أن لا يَجوزُ خُبوتُها
فما هذه الايّامُ إلّا نظائرٌ * تساوتْ بها آحادُها وسُبوتُها

( 251 )

تفوَّهَ دهرُكم عَجَبًا فأَصْغُوا * الى ما ظَلَّ يُخْبِرُ يا شُهودُ
اذا آفتكَرَ الذين لهم عُقولٌ * رأَوْا نَبَأً يُحَقُّ له السُّهودُ
غدا أَهْلُ الشرائع فى آختلافٍ * تُقِضُّ به المَضاجعُ والمُهُودُ
فقد كذبتْ على عيسى النَّصارَى * كما كذبتْ على موسى اليَهودُ
ولم تَسْتحدِثِ الايّامُ خُلْقًا * ولا حالت من الزَّمَن العُهودُ

249. Z 30, 40. ١ O بدافع ولا نافع. ٣ Z مِلْكِ. ٥ Z بظَمآء.
٧ Z غواةً. ٨ O وبادوا ودامت.

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دينٌ وكُفرٌ وأَنبآءٌ تُقَصُّ وفُرْقانٌ يُنَصُّ وتَوْراةٌ وإِنْجيلُ
فى كلّ جيلٍ اباطيلٌ يُدانُ بها * فهل تفرَّدَ يومًا بالهُدَى جيلُ

( 253 )

كيف ٱحتيالُك والقضآءُ مُدَبِّرٌ * تَجْنى الأَذَى وتقولُ أنّك مُجْبَرُ
أَرْواحُنا معنا وليس لنا بها * عِلْمٌ فكيف اذا حَوَتْها الأَقْبُرُ
ومتى سَرَى عن أَربعينَ حليفُها * فالشَّخْصُ يصغُرُ والحوادثُ تَكْبُرُ
نَفْسٌ تُحِسُّ بأمرِ أُخْرَى هذه * جسْرٌ اليها بالمَخاوف يُعْبَرُ
ه من للدفينِ بأن يفرَّجَ لَحْدُهُ * عنه فيَنْهضَ وهو أَشْعَثُ أَغْبَرُ
والدهرُ يَقْدُمُ والمَعاشرُ تنقضى * والعَجْزُ تصديقٌ بمَيْنٍ يُخْبِرُ
زعم الفلاسفةُ الذين تنطَّسوا * أنّ المنيّة كَسْرُها لا يُجْبَرُ
قالوا وآدَمُ مثلُ أَوْبَرَ والوَرَى * كبَناتِهِ جَهِلَ ٱمْرؤٌ ما أَوْبَرُ
كُلُّ الذى تحكون عن مولاكُمُ * كَذِبٌ أَتاكُم عن يَهودَ يُحَبَّرُ
١٠ رامت به الأَحْبارُ نَيْلَ معيشةٍ * فى الدهر والعَمَلُ القبيحُ يُتَبَّرُ

( 254 )

فلْتَفْعَلِ النفسُ الجميلَ لأنّه * خيرٌ وأَحْسَنُ لا لأَجْلِ ثَوابِها
* * *
وتخالُفُ الرُّؤَسآءِ يَشْهَدُ مُقْسِمًا * أنّ المعاشر ما ٱهتدتْ لصَوابِها
* * *
جِيبَتْ فلاةٌ للغِنَى فأَصابها * نَفَرٌ وصينَ الغَيْبُ عن جُوّابِها

( 255 )

غدا الحقُّ فى دار تحرَّزَ أَهلُها * وطُفْتُ بهم كالسارق المُتَلَصِّصِ
فقالوا ألا ٱذْهَبْ ما لِمثلك عندنا * مَقيلٌ وحاذِرْ من يقينٍ مُفَصِّصِ
ألم تَرَنا رُحْنا مع الطَّيْر بالهُدَى * وأنتَ طريحٌ ذو جَناحٍ مُقَصَّصِ

252. S 100.

اذا شُهِرَ الانسانُ بالدين لم تكن * له رُتْبةُ المستأنِسِ المُتَخَصِّصِ
فطَبْعُك سلطانٌ لعَقْلك غالبٌ * تَداولُهُ أَهْواؤُهُ بالتَّشَصُّصِ
سُقِيتَ شرابًا لم تُهَنَّأْ ببَرْده * فعُنّيتَ من بعد الصَّدَى بالتَّغَصُّصِ

(256)

عاشوا كما عاش آباءٌ لهم سلفوا * وأَورثوا الدينَ تقليدًا كما وَجَدوا
فما يُراعون ما قالوا وما سمعوا * ولا يُبالون من غيٍّ لمن سَجَدوا
والعُدْمُ أَرْوَحُ ممّا فيه عالَمُهُم * وهو التكلّفُ إن هَبّوا وإن هَجَدوا

(257)

وينشأُ ناشئُ الفِتْيانِ منّا * على ما كان عوَّدَهُ أَبوهُ
وما دانَ الفتى بحِجًى ولكن * يعلِّمهُ التديُّنَ أَقْرَبوهُ
وطفلُ الفارسىّ له وُلاةٌ * بأَفعال التمجُّس دَرَّبوهُ

(258)

وجدتُ الشَّرْعَ تُخْلقه الليالى * كما خَلُقَ الرِّداءُ الشَّرْعَبىُّ
هى العاداتُ يَجْرى الشيخُ منّا * على شِيَمٍ يعوِّدُها الصَّبىُّ

(259)

فى كلّ أَمرك تقليدٌ رضيتَ به * حتّى مَقالِك رَبّى واحدٌ أَحَدُ
وقد أُمِرْنا بفِكْرٍ فى بدائعه * وإن تفكَّر فيه مَعْشَرٌ لَحَدوا
وأهلُ كلّ جِدالٍ يُمْسِكون به * اذا رأوا نورَ حقٍّ ظاهرٍ جَحَدوا

(260)

لم يُثْبتوا بقياسٍ أَصْلَ دينهمِ * فيَحْكموا بين رُفّاضٍ ونُصّابِ
ما الرُّكْنُ فى قول ناسٍ لستُ أَذْكُرُهُمْ * إلّا بقيّةُ أَوْثانٍ وأَنْصابِ

257. S 107. 258. Z 38, 526. ٢ Z منها. Z تَعَوَّدَها.

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اذا رجع الحصيفُ الى حِجاهُ * تهاوَنَ بالمذاهب وٱزْدَراها
فخُذْ منها بما أدّاهُ لُبٌّ * ولا يَغْمِسْك جَهْلٌ فى صَراها

( 262 )

لو يُتْرَكون وهذا اللُّبَّ ما قَبِلوا * مينًا يقال ولكن شالت الجِذَمُ
أتَوْهُمُ بأحاديث وقيل لهم * قولوا صُدِقْنا وإلّا أُرْوِىَ الخِذَمُ
وأرْهَبَتْهم جُفونٌ مِلْؤُها نُوَبٌ * وأرْغَبَتْهم جِفانٌ للنَّدَى رُذُمُ

( 263 )

كأنّ مُنجّم الأقوامِ أعْمَى * لَدَيْهِ الصُّحْفُ يقرأُها بلَمْسِ
لقد طال العناءُ فكم يُعانى * سُطورًا عادَ كاتبُها بطَمْسِ
دعا موسى فزال وقام عيسى * وجاءَ محمّدٌ بصلاةِ خَمْسِ
وقيل يجىءُ دينٌ غير هذا * واودى الناسُ بين غدٍ وأَمْسِ
ه ومن لى أن يعودَ الدينُ غَضًّا * فيَنْقَعَ من تنسّكَ بعد خِمْسِ
ومَهْما كان فى دنياك أَمْرٌ * فما تُخْليك من قمرٍ وشَمْسِ
وآخِرُها بأوّلها شبيهٌ * وتُصْبِحُ فى عجائبها وتُمْسِى
قُدومُ أصاغرٍ ورَحيلُ شِيبٍ * وهِجْرةُ مَنْزِلٍ وحُلولُ رَمْسِ
لحاها اللهُ دارًا ما تُدارَى * بمثل المَيْنِ فى لُجَجٍ وقَمْسِ
١٠ اذا قلتُ المُحالَ رفعتُ صَوْتى * وإن قلتُ اليقينَ أَطَلْتُ هَمْسى

( 264 )

ما لى بما بعدَ الردى مَخْبَرَهْ * قد أَدْمَت الأَنْفَ هذى البُرَهْ
الليلُ والإصباحُ والقَيْظُ والإبرادُ والمَنْزِلُ والمَقْبُرَهْ
كم رامَ سَبْرَ الأمر مَنْ قَبْلَنا * فنادت القُدْرةُ لن تَسْبُرَهْ

262. ٢ BL صدقنا.

263. Text and translation by Von Kremer in *Sitzungsberichte d. Kais. Akad. zu Wien*, vol. 93, p. 636 fol. ٥ BC فينفَعَ. ٩ Von K. reads تُدارِى and لَجَجٍ. The World, being ruled by Fate, goes on its way and is not to be cajoled by the pitiful tales of those who have suffered shipwreck in it.

( 265 )

يا روحُ كم تَحملين الجسمَ لاهيةً * أَبْلَيْتِهِ فاَطْرحيه طال ما لُبِسا
ان كنتِ آثرْتِ سُكْناه فمُخطئةٌ * فيما فعلتِ وكم من ضاحكٍ عَبَسا
او لا فجَبْرٌ وإن أَشْوَى فجاهلةٌ * كالماَء لم يَدْرِ ما لاقاهُ اذ حُبِسا
لو لم تَحُلّيه لم يَهْتَجْ لمَعْصيةٍ * وكان كالتُّرب ما أَخْنَى ولا نَبَسا
ه تركْتِ مِصْباحَ عقلٍ ما اهتديتِ به * واللهُ أَعْطاكِ من نور الحِجَى قَبَسا

( 266 )

كإناَءِكِ الجسمُ الذى هو صورةٌ * لكِ فى الحياة فحاذِرى أن تُخْدَعى
لا فَضْلَ للقَدَح الذى استودَعْتَهُ * ضَرَبًا ولكن فَضْلُهُ للمُودَعِ

( 267 )

وشَخْصى وروحى مثلُ طفلٍ وأُمِّهِ * لتلك بهذا من يدِ الربِّ عاقِدُ
يموتان مثلَ الناظرَيْن تَوارَدا * فلا هو مفقودٌ ولا هى فاقِدُ

( 268 )

روحٌ اذا اتَّصلتْ بشَخْص لم يزل * هو وهى فى مَرَضِ العناَءِ المُكْمِدِ
إن كنتِ من ريحٍ فيا ريحُ اسْكُنى * او كنتِ من لَهَبٍ فيا لَهَبُ اخْمُدِ

( 269 )

ما زالت الروحُ قَبْلَ اليوم فى دعةٍ * حتّى استقَرّت بحُكم الله فى الجَسَدِ
فالآنَ تلك وهذا من قَذًى وأَذًى * لا يُخْليانك بَلْهَ الغِلِّ والحَسَدِ
قال الدَّنىُّ لمالٍ كان سادَ به * لَأُكْرِمَنَّك لولا أَنتَ لم أَسُدِ

266. ٢ C استودعتُهُ. 267. ٢ O توارَدا. 268. Z 31, 474.

( 270 )

والروحُ شيءٌ لطيفٌ ليس يُدركه * عقلٌ ويَسكن من جسْم الفتى حَرَجا
سبحانَ ربِّك هل يَبقى الرشادُ له * وهل يُحِسُّ بما يَلْقَى اذا خَرَجا
وذاك نورٌ لأَجسادٍ يحسّنها * كما تبيَّنْتَ تحت الليلةِ السُّرُجا
قالت معاشرُ يبقى عند جُثّته * وقال ناسٌ اذا لاقَى الردى عَرَجا
ه وليس فى الإنس من نَفْسٍ اذا قُبضتْ * سافَ الذين لدَيْها طِيبَها الأَرِجا
وأَسعدُ الناسِ بالدنيا أَخو زُهْدٍ * نافَى بنيها ونادَوْا اذ مضى دَرَجا

( 271 )

دفنّاهُمُ فى الارض دَفْنَ تيقُّنٍ * ولا عِلْمَ بالأَرواح غير ظُنونِ
ورَوْمُ الفتى ما قد طَوَى اللهُ عِلْمَهُ * يُعَدُّ جُنونًا او شَبيهَ جُنونِ

( 272 )

مرَّ الزمانُ فأَضحى فى الثرى جَسَدٌ * فهل تملَّى رجالٌ بالمَلاواتِ
والروحُ أَرْضيّةٌ فى رأى طائفةٍ * وعند قوم تَرَقَّى فى السَّمٰواتِ
تمضى على هَيْئة الشَّخْص الذى سكنتْ * فيه الى دار نُعْمَى او شَقاواتِ
وكَوْنُها فى طَريح الجسمِ أَحْوَجَها * الى مَلابِسَ عَنَّتْها وأَقْواتِ
ه وقُدرةُ الله حقٌّ ليس يُعْجزها * حَشْرٌ لخَلْقٍ ولا بَعْثٌ لأَمواتِ
فأَعْجَبْ لعُلْويّةِ الأَجْرام صامتةً * فيما يقال ومنها ذاتُ أَصْواتِ
ولا تُطيعَنَّ قومًا ما ديانتُهُمْ * إلّا احتيالٌ على أَخْذِ الإتاواتِ
وانّما حمَّل التَّوْراةَ قارئَها * كَسْبُ الفوائد لا حُبُّ التِّلاواتِ
إنّ الشرائع أَلْقَتْ بيننا إحَنًا * وأَودعتْنا أَفانينَ العَداواتِ
١٠ وهل أُبيحتْ نِساءُ القوم عن عُرُضٍ * للعُرْبِ إلّا بأَحكام النُّبُوّاتِ

واكل الفتى ما يتّقى الموت مثله .271. ٢ O reads in the first hemistich:
نسآء الروم .272. ١٠ O

( 273 )

قد قيل إنّ الروح تأسفُ بعدَ ما * تَنْأَى عن الجَسَد الذى غَنِيَتْ بِهِ
ان كان يَصْحَبها الحِجَى فلعلّها * تدرى وتأْبَهُ للزمان وعَتْبِهِ
او لا فكم هَذَيانِ قوم غابرٍ * فى الكُتْب ضاع مِدادُهُ فى كَتْبِهِ

( 274 )

ان يَصحب الروحَ عقلى بعد مَظْعَنها * للموت عنّى فأَجْدِرْ أن تَرَى عَجَبا
وان مضت فى الهوآء الرَّحْبِ هالكةً * هلاكَ جسمىَ فى تُرْبى فوا شَجَبا
الدينُ إنصافُك الاقوامَ كُلَّهُمُ * وأىُّ دين لآبى الحقِّ إن وَجَبا
والمرءُ يُعْيِيهِ قَوْدُ النفْس مُصْحِبةً * للخيرِ وهو يَقودُ العسكرَ اللَّجِبا
وصَوْمُهُ الشهرَ ما لم يَجْنِ مَعْصيةً * يُغنيهِ عن صَوْمه شَعْبانَ او رَجَبا
وما اتّبعتُ نجيبًا فى شمائله * وفى الحِمام تَبعتُ السادةَ النُّجُبا
واحذَرْ دُعآءَ ظليمٍ فى نَعامته * فرُبَّ دعوةِ داعٍ تَخْرِقُ الحُجُبا

( 275 )

وقد زعموا هذى النفوسَ بواقيًا * تُشَكَّلُ فى أَجسامها وتُهَذَّبُ
وتُنْقَلُ منها فالسعيدُ مكرَّمٌ * بما هو لاقٍ والشقىُّ مُشَذَّبُ

( 276 )

أَمَيّتةٌ شُهْبُ الدُّجَى ام مُحِسّةٌ * ولا عقلَ أم فى آلها الحِسُّ والعَقْلُ
ودانَ أُناسٌ بالجَزآءِ وكَوْنِهِ * وقال رجالٌ انّما أَنتمُ بَقْلُ
فأُوصيكُمُ امّا قبيحًا فجانِبوا * وأمّا جميلًا من فَعالٍ فلا تَقْلُوا
فإنّى وجدتُ النفسَ تُبدى ندامةً * على ما جَنَتْهُ حينَ يَحضرها النَّقْلُ
وإن صَدئتْ أَرواحُنا فى جُسومنا * فيُوشِكُ يومًا أن يُعاوِدَها الصَّقْلُ

273. ٣ BL أَوْلَى. BL فى كُتْبِهِ.
275. ١ BL تَشَّكَلُ. BL وتَهَذَّبُ.
276. Z 38, 511.

(277)

يا آكِلَ التُّفاحِ لا تَبْعَدَنْ * ولا يُقِمْ يومٌ رَدًى ثاكِلَكْ
قال النُّصَيْرِىُّ وما قُلْتُهُ * فَٱسْمَعْ وشَجِّعْ فى الوَغَى ناكِلَكْ
قد كنتَ فى دهرك تُفّاحةً * وكان تفّاحُك ذا آكِلَكْ

(278)

يقولون إنّ الجسم يُنْقَلُ روحُهُ * الى غيره حتّى يُهذّبَها النَّقْلُ
فلا تَقْبَلَنْ ما يُخْبرونك ضِلّةً * اذا لم يُؤَيِّدْ ما أتَوْك به العَقْلُ
وليس جُسومٌ كالنَّخيل وإن سما * بها الفَرْعُ إلّا مثلَ ما نَبَتَ البَقْلُ
فعِشْ وادعًا وٱرْفُقْ بنفسك طالبًا * فإنّ حُسام الهِنْد يَنْهَكُهُ الصَّقْلُ

(279)

لَعَمْرى لقد طالت على المُدْلِج السُّرَى * وليس يرى فى حِنْدِسٍ لَهَبًا يُسخَى
وَجَدْنا ٱتّباعَ الشَّرْع حَزْمًا لذى النُّهَى * ومن جرَّب الايّامَ لم يُنْكِر النَّسْخا
فما بالُ هذا العَصْر ما فيه آيةٌ * من المَسْخ ان كانت يَهودُ رأَتْ مَسْخا
وقالت بأَحكام التناسخ مَعْشَرٌ * غلَوْا فأَجازوا الفَسْخَ فى ذاك والرَّسْخا
ومن يَعْفُ عن ذَنْبٍ ويَسْخُ بنائلٍ * فخالقُنا أَعْفَى وراحتُهُ أَسْخَى

(280)

لستُ أَنْفى عن قُدْرة الله أَشباحَ ضِيآءٍ بغير لَحْمٍ ولا دَمْ
وبَصيرُ الأَقوام مثلىَ أَعْمَى * فهلُمُّوا فى حِنْدِس نَتَصادَمْ

(281)

فٱخشَ المليكَ ولا توجَدْ على رَهَبٍ * إن أَنتَ بالجِنّ فى الظَّلْمآء خُشِّيتا
فانّما تلك أخبارٌ ملفَّقةٌ * لخُدْعة الغافلِ الحَشْوىِّ حُوشِيتا

279. ٢ C لأُولى (*sic*) for لذى.

278. Z 38, 510.

281. ٢ L الحُوشىّ.

( 282 )

قال المنجّم والطبيب كِلاهما * لا تُحْشَرُ الأجسادُ قلتُ إِلَيْكُما
ان صحَّ قولُكما فلستُ بخاسرٍ * او صحَّ قولى فالخَسارُ عَلَيْكُما

( 283 )

امّا القيامةُ فالتنازعُ شائعٌ * فيها وما لخَبيئِها إِصْحارُ
قالت مَعاشرُ ما للؤلؤ عائمٍ * يومًا الى ظُلَم المَحارِ مَحارُ
وبدائعُ الله القديرِ كثيرةٌ * فيَخورُ فيها لُبُّنا ويَحارُ

( 284 )

تَقِلُّ جُسومَنا أَقدامُ سَفْرٍ * مَشَتْ فى ليلِ داجيةٍ بوَعْثِ
وظاهرُ أَمْرِنا عيشٌ وموتٌ * ويَدْأَبُ ناسكٌ لرجآءِ بَعْثِ
فما رِجْلٌ مخلَّدةٌ بِحِجْلٍ * ولا أُذنٌ منعَّمةٌ برَعْثِ

( 285 )

تعجَّلَ ميّتٌ بالهُلْكِ نَقْدًا * فمرَّ وعنده للبَعْثِ وَعْدُ

( 286 )

خُذِ المِرْآةَ وٱستخبِرْ نُجومًا * تَمُرُّ بمَطْعَم الأَرْيِ المَشورِ
تَدُلُّ على الحِمام بلا ٱرتيابٍ * ولكن لا تدلُّ على النُّشورِ

( 287 )

يا شُهْبُ إِنّكِ فى السمآء قديمةٌ * وأَشَرْتِ للحُكمآء كُلَّ مُشارِ
أَخْبرْتِ عن موت يكون منجَّمًا * أَفتُخْبِرينَ بحادثِ الإِنْشارِ

283. S 96. 284. ٣ O ممتعة برعث. 286. S 98. ١ BCLS تمِر.

287. S 98. ١ BLS للعلمآء. BL give للحكمآء as a variant. ٢ BLS مُنَجِّمًا.

( 288 )

ضَحِكْنا وكان الضَّحْكُ منّا سفاهةً * وحُقَّ لسُكّان البسيطةِ أن يَبْكُوا
يُحطِّمنا رَيْبُ الزمان كأنّنا * زُجاجٌ ولكن لا يُعادُ له سَبْكُ

( 289 )

لو كان جسمُك متروكًا بهَيْئَتِهِ * بعد التَّلافِ طَمِعْنا فى تَلافيهِ
كالدَّنِّ عُطِّلَ من راحٍ تكون به * ولم يحطَّمْ فعادت مرّةً فيهِ
لكنَّهُ صار أَجْزآءً مقسَّمةً * ثمّ ٱستمرَّ هَبآءً فى سَوافيهِ

( 290 )

نَفضتُ عنّى تُرابًا وهو لى نَسَبٌ * وذاك يُحْسَبُ من قَطْعِ الفتى رَحِما
يا هُونَ ما أَوْعَدَ اللهُ العبادَ به * إن صار جسمىَ فى تحريقه فَحَما
وانّما هو تخليدٌ بلا أَمَدٍ * تمضى الدُّهورُ وصالى النارِ ما رُحِما

( 291 )

اذا أَتانى حِمامى ماحيًا شَبَحى * وما صَنعتُ فعيشى كلُّه عَنَتُ
لعلّ قومًا يجازيهِمْ مليكُهُمُ * اذا لَقُوهُ بما صاموا وما قَنَتوا

( 292 )

زعموا أنّنى سأَرْجِعُ شَرْخًا * كيف لى كيف لى وذاك ٱلتِماسى
وأَزورُ الجِنانَ أُخْبَرُ فيها * بعد طولِ الهُمودِ فى الأَرْماسِ
وتَزولُ العُيونُ عنّى اذا حُمَّ بعَيْن الحياة ثَمَّ ٱنْغِماسى

( 293 )

أَخَبَّتْ رِكابى أم أُتيحَ لها خَبْتُ * عَميمُ رِياضٍ ما يزالُ به نَبْتُ
وكفَّرها ليلٌ تَرَهَّبَ شُهْبُهُ * تُخالُ يَهودًا عاقَ عن سَيْرِها السَّبْتُ
وهيَّجها قولٌ يقال عن الحِمَى * وذاك حديثٌ ما مُحَدِّثُهُ ثَبْتُ

288. Z 38, 507. ٢ Z صرف الزمان. Z السَّبْكُ.
292. ٣ O وتزول العيوب. 293. ٢ BL تَرَهَّبُ.

( 294 )

إن صحَّ لى أنّنى سَعيدُ * فلَيْتَنى ضمَّنى صَعيدُ
صُمْتُ حياتى الى مَماتى * لعلّ يوم الحِمامِ عيدُ
وراءنى للحِساب ذِكْر * وغرنى انه بعيد
وعن يَمينى وعن شِمالى * يَصحبنى حافظٌ قَعيدُ

* * *

٥ اذا رجوْنا قضآءَ وَعْدٍ * فكيف لا يُرْهَبُ الوَعيدُ

( 295 )

وآخِرُ عَهْدِ القوم بى يومَ تنطوى * علىَّ جَرورُ الوِرْدِ يُكْرَهُ زَبْرُها
فهل يَرْتجى خُضْرَ المَلابسِ ظاعنٌ * وقد مُزّقتْ فى باطن الأرضِ غُبْرُها
أَتَتْنىَ أنبآءٌ كثيرٌ شُجونُها * لها طُرُقٌ أَعْيا على الناس خُبْرُها
هفا دونَها قَسُّ النَّصارَى ومُوبَذُ * المَجوسِ ودَيّانُ اليَهودِ وحَبْرُها
٥ وخَطُّوا احاديثًا لهم فى صحائفٍ * لقد ضاعت الأوراقُ فيها وحِبْرُها
تخالفت الأَشْياعُ فى عُقُب الرَّدَى * وتلك بِحارٌ ليس يُدْرَكُ عِبْرُها
وقيل نُفوسُ الناس تسطيعُ فِعْلَها * وقال رجالٌ بلْ تَبَيَّنَ جَبْرُها
ولو خُلقتْ أَجْسامُنا من صُبارةٍ * لقَلَّ على كَرِّ الحوادثِ صَبْرُها

( 296 )

نرجو السلامةَ فى العُقْبَى وما حَسُنَتْ * أعمالُنا فيُرَجَّى الفَوْزُ والغُرَفُ
ما بان قومٌ عن الأُولَى بما جمعوا * من الحُطام ولكن بالذى ٱقترَفُوا
سألتُ عقلى فلم يُخْبِرْ وقلتُ له * سَلِ الرِّجالَ فما أَفْتَوْا ولا عَرَفُوا
قالوا فمانوا فلمّا أن حَدَوْتُهُمُ * الى القِياس أَبانوا العَجْزَ وٱعْتَرَفُوا

( 297 )

وتَحْسِبُ أنّ التّقىَّ الذى * تشاهدُهُ راكعًا ساجِدا
تَنَبَّهْ فأنتَ على غِرّةٍ * إخالُك مستَيْقِظًا هاجِدا

( 298 )

سَبِّحْ وصَلِّ وطُفْ بمَكّةَ زائرًا * سَبْعينَ لا سَبْعًا فلستَ بناسِكِ
جَهِلَ الديانةَ من اذا عَرَضَتْ له * أَطماعُهُ لم يُلْفَ بالمتماسِكِ

( 299 )

أُمُّ الكِتابِ اذا قوّمتَ مُحْكَمَها * وَجَدْتَها لأَداء الفَرْض تَكْفيكا
لم يَشْفِ قَلْبَك فُرْقانٌ ولا عِظةٌ * وآيةٌ لو أَطَعْتَ اللهَ تَشْفيكا

( 300 )

توهَّمْتَ يا مغرورُ أنّك دَيّنٌ * علىَّ يَمينُ اللهِ ما لك دِينُ
تَسيرُ الى البَيْت الحرامِ تنسّكًا * ويشكوك جارٌ بائسٌ وخَدِينُ

( 301 )

وتُقْسَمُ حُظْوةٌ حتّى صُخورٌ * يُزَرْنَ فيُسْتَلَمْنَ ويُلْتَمَسْنَهْ
كذاتِ القُدْسِ او رُكْنَىْ قُرَيْشٍ * وأُسرتُهُنَّ أَحْجارٌ لُطِسْنَهْ

( 302 )

أَرى أُمَّ القُرَى خُصَّتْ بهَجْرٍ * وسارت نَمْلُ مَكّةَ عن قُراها
وكم سَرَت الرِّفاقُ الى صَلاحٍ * فمارَسَت الشدائدَ فى سُراها
يُوافون البَنيّةَ كلَّ عامٍ * ليُلْقُوا المُخْزِياتِ على قَراها
ضيوفٌ ما قَراها اللهُ عَفْوًا * ولكن من نوائبها قَراها
وما سَيْرى الى أَحْجار بيتٍ * كُؤُوسُ الخَمْر تُشْرَبُ فى ذَراها
ولم تَنْزِلِ الأَباطحُ منذ كانت * يدنّسُ من فواجرها بَراها

301. S 104.

298. Z 31, 483.

( 303 )

أَرى عالَمًا يرجون عفوَ مليكِهِمْ * بتقبيل رُكْنٍ وٱتّخاذِ صَليبِ
فغُفرانَك اللّهُمَّ هل أَنا طارحٌ * بمَكّةَ فى وَفْدٍ ثيابَ سَليبِ
وهل أَرِدُ الغُدرانَ بين صحابةٍ * يَمانينَ لم يَبْغوا ٱحتفارَ قَليبِ

( 304 )

أَقيمى لا أَعُدُّ الحَجَّ فَرْضًا * على عُجُز النِّسآءِ ولا العَذارَى
ففى بَطْحآءِ مكّةَ شَرُّ قومٍ * وليسوا بالحُماةِ ولا الغَيارَى
وإنّ رجالَ شَيْبةَ سادِنيها * اذا راحتْ لكَعْبتها الجَمارَى
قِيامٌ يَدفعون الوَفْدَ شَفْعًا * الى البيت الحرام وهم سَكارَى
اذا أَخذوا النزوائفَ أَوْلَجوهم * ولو كانوا اليهودَ أَوِ النَّصارَى
متى آداكِ خيرٌ فٱفْعَليهِ * وقُولى إن دعاكِ البِرُّ آرَى
فلو قَبِلَ الغُواةُ عَرَفْتِ كشْفى * من الكَذِب المموَّهِ ما تَوارَى
ولا تَثِقى بما صنعوا وصاغُوا * فقد جاءتْ خُيولُهُمُ تَبارَى
جَرَتْ زمنًا وتسكُنُ بعدَ حينٍ * وأَقْضيةُ المُهَيْمِنِ لا تُجارَى

* * *

وما كَرِيَتْ عُيونُ الناسِ جَمْعًا * ولكن فى دُجُنّتِها تَكارَى
لهم كَلِمٌ تُخالِفُ ما أَجنّوا * صُدورُهُمُ بصِحّته تَمارَى

( 305 )

المَيْنُ أَهْلَكَ فوق الأَرضِ ساكِنَها * فما تَصادَقُ فى أَنبآءها الشِّيَعُ
لولا عَداوةُ أَصْلٍ فى طِباعِهِمُ * كانت مَساجدُ مقرونًا بها البِيَعُ

303. ٢ BC سليبى. LO سليب.

304. Z 30, 45. All texts have الغيارا, العذارا, etc. ١ C عَجُز. ٥ O اولجتهم. ٦ آداك = امكنك. O آراك. BL عُجْز. ٧ Z فلو قَبْلَ الغُواةِ. ١٠ LZ كُرِيَتْ.

305. Z 31, 477. ١ BCL ابنآئها.

( 306 )

لَعَمْرى لقد أَمِنَ العائذونَ * وعُونِشَ ذو بِغضةٍ فٱعْتَنَشْ
فيا قُسُّ وَقِّعْ بِرِزْق الخطيـــــبِ وٱنْظُرْ بمَسْجِدنا يا مَنَشْ

( 307 )

أَما ٱسْتَحَى العَدْلُ وأَخْبارُهُ * سَيِّئَةٌ فى أُذُن السامِعِ
ما جارَ شَمّاسُك فى حُكمه * ولا يَهوديُّك بالطامِعِ
فالقَسُّ خيرٌ لك فيما أُرَى * من مُسْلِمٍ يَخْطُبُ فى الجامِعِ

( 308 )

ظَلمتم غيرَكم فأُديلَ منكم * وأَخيارُ الأنام مُظَلّموهُ
تهاونتم بمَطْران النَّصارَى * وأَشياعُ ٱبن مَرْيَمَ عَظَّموهُ
وقال لكم نَبيئُكُمُ اذا ما * كريمُ القوم جاءَ فأَكْرِموهُ
فلا يَرجِعْ خطيبُكُمُ بحقدٍ * متى لاقاهُمُ فتَهَضَّموهُ

( 309 )

اذا الإنسانُ كَفَّ الشَرَّ عنّى * فسُقْيا فى الحياة له ورُعْيا
ويَدْرُسْ إن أَرادَ كتابَ مُوسَى * ويُضْمِرُ إن أَحبَّ وَلاَءَ شَعْيا

( 310 )

نَبذتُمُ الأَديانَ من خَلْفِكم * وليس فى الحِكمة أن تُنْبَذا
لا قاضىَ المِصْر أَطَعْتم ولا الـــحَبْرَ ولا القَسَّ ولا المُوبَذا
إن عُرِضَتْ مِلّتُكم بينهم * قال جميعُ القوم لا حَبَّذا

306. ١ BCLZ مظلّموه. ٢ BL قَسُّ. BL مُنَشْ. 308. Z 38, 525.
309. S 108. ١ BLS فَسَقْيًا. BLS ورَعْيا.

( 311 )

مِرْآةُ عقْلك إن رأَيتَ بها سِوَى * ما فى حِجاك أَرَتْهُ وهو قَبيحُ
أَسْنَى فَعالِك ما أَردتَ بفِعْله * رَشَدًا وخيرُ كَلامك التَّسْبيحُ

( 312 )

ما الخيرُ صَوْمٌ يَذوبُ الصائمون له * ولا صلاةٌ ولا صُوفٌ على الجَسَدِ
وانّما هو تَرْكُ الشرّ مُطَّرَحًا * ونَفْضُك الصَّدْرَ من غِلٍّ ومن حَسَدِ
ما دامت الوَحْشُ والأَنعامُ خائفةً * فَرْسًا فما صحَّ أَمْرُ النُّسْكِ للأَسَدِ

( 313 )

أَلم تَرَ أنّ الخيرَ يَكْسِبهُ الحِجَى * طريفًا وأنّ الشرّ فى الطبْع مُتْلَدُ
لقد رابَنى مَغْدَى الفقيرِ بجهْله * على العَيْر ضَرْبًا ساءَ ما يَتَقَلَّدُ
يُحَمِّلُهُ ما لا يُطيقُ فان وَنَى * أَحالَ على ذى فَتْرةٍ يَتَجَلَّدُ
يَظَلُّ كزانٍ مُفْتَرٍ غيرِ مُحْصَنٍ * يُقامُ عليه الحدُّ شَفْعًا فيُجْلَدُ
تَظاهَرُ أَبْلادُ الرزايا بظَهْره * وكَشْحَيْهِ فاعْذِرْ عاجزًا يَتَبَلَّدُ
لنا خالقٌ لا يَمترى العقلُ أنّه * قديمٌ فما هذا الحديثُ المُوَلَّدُ
وإن كان زَنْدُ البِرّ لم يُورِ طائلًا * فتلك زِنادُ الغىّ أَكْبَى وأَصْلَدُ
وما سرَّنى أنّى أَصبتُ معاشرًا * بظُلْمٍ وأنّى فى النعيم مُخَلَّدُ

( 314 )

الخير كالعَرْفَج المطورِ ضرَّمهُ * راعٍ يَئِطُّ ولمّا أن ذكا خَمَدا
والشرّ كالنار شُبّتْ لَيْلَها بغَضًا * يأتى على جَمْرها دهرٌ وما هَمَدا

* * *

ولا تَشيمَنْ حُسامًا كى تُريقَ دمًا * كفاك سيفٌ لهذا الدهرِ ما غُمِدا
وشاعَ فى الناس قولٌ لستُ أَعْهَدُهُ * وذاك أنّ رجالًا ذامت الصَّمَدا
أَيُحْمَدُ المرءُ لم يَهْمُمْ بمَكْرُمةٍ * يومًا ويُتْرَكُ مَوْلَى العُرْف ما حُمِدا

3I3. 4 B غَيْرَ.

(315)

تورَّعوا يا بنى حوّآءَ عن كَذِبٍ * فما لكم عند ربِّ صاغكم خَطَرُ
لم تُجْدِبوا لقبيح من فَعالكُمُ * ولم يجئكم لحُسْن التَّوْبة المَطَرُ

(316)

متى ما فعلتَ الخيرَ ثُمَّ كُفِرْتَهُ * فلا تأْسَفَنْ إنّ المُهَيْمِنَ آجِرُ
ولو لم يَبَرّ الحُرُّ إلّا مخافةً * من الخِزْى بين الناس إن قيل فاجِرُ
فنَزِّهْ جميلًا جئتَهُ عن جَزايةٍ * تؤَمَّلُ او رِبْحٍ كأنّك تاجِرُ

(317)

لَعَمْرى لقد نام الفتى عن حِمامه * الى أن أَتاهُ حَتْفُهُ مُتَوَسِّنا
اذا ما فعلتَ الخير فٱجعلْه خالصًا * لرَبّك وٱزْجُرْ عن مَديحك أَلْسُنا
فكَوْنُك فى هذى الحياة مُصيبةٌ * يُعزّيك عنها أن تَبَرَّ وتُحْسِنا

(318)

حرامٌ على النفْس الخبيثة بَيْنُها * عن الجسم حتّى يَجْزىَ السُّوءَ مُحْسِنا
فلا تُسْدِ للناس الجميلَ وأَسْدِهِ * لرَبّك وٱنْفُضْ عن عُيون تَوَسُّنا

(319)

هل تَحْفَظُ الارضُ مَوْتاها وأَهْلُهُمُ * لمّا بدا اليأْسُ أَقْوَهم فما حُفِظُوا
ان شآءَ ربّك جازاهم بفعْلِهِمُ * واللَّفْظِ حينَ تُثارُ الأَقْبُرُ اللُّفُظُ

(320)

الظُّلمُ فى الطبْع فالجاراتُ مُرْهَقةٌ * والعُرْفُ يُستَرُ والميزانُ مَبْخوسُ
والطِّرفُ يُضرَبُ والأَنْعامُ مأْكَلةٌ * والعَيْرُ حاملُ ثِقْلٍ وهو مَنْخوسُ

316. ٣ All the texts read جزايةٍ, a form which is not found in the lexica. جِرايةٍ would be an easy but unconvincing emendation.

318. ١٠ تجزى.

( 321 )

وسِـيّـانِ أُمُّ بَـرّةٌ وحَمامـةٌ * غَذَتْ وَلَدًا فى مَهْده وغَذَت بُجّا
فلا تَبْكُرَنْ يومًا بكَفّك مُدْيةٌ * لتُهلِكَ فَرْخًا فـى مَواطنه دَجّا

( 322 )

تَصَدَّقْ على الطير الغوادى بشَرْبةٍ * من المآء واَعْدُدْها أَحَقَّ من الإِنْسِ
فـمـا جِنْسُها جانٍ عليك أَذيّـةً * بحالٍ اذا ما خِفْتَ من ذلك الجِنْسِ

( 323 )

تسريحُ كَفّىَ بُرْغُوثًا ظَفِرْتُ به * أَبَرُّ مـن دِرْهَمٍ تُعْطيهِ مُحْتاجا
لا فَرْقَ بين الأَسَكِّ الجَوْنِ أُطْلِقُهُ * وجَوْنِ كِنْدةَ أَمْسَى يَعْقِدُ التّاجا
كـلاهـمـا يـتـوقّى والحياةُ لـه * حـبـيـبـةٌ ويرومُ العيشَ مُهْتاجا

( 324 )

يرى الفِكْرُ أنّ النور فى الدهر مُحْدَثٌ * وما عُنْصُرُ الأَوقات إلّا حُلوكُها
فلا تَرْغَبوا فى المُلك تَعْصَوْنَ بالظُّبَى * عليه فمِنْ أَشْقَى الرجالِ مُلوكُها
وإنّ غُـروب الـشـمـس كُـلَّ عشيّةٍ * يُحَدِّثُ أَهْلَ اللُّبِّ عنه دُلوكُها

( 325 )

تُشادُ الـمَـغـانـى والقُبورُ دَوارِسُ * ولا يَمنع المطروقَ بـابٌ وحارِسُ
يقولون إنّ الدين يُنْسَخُ مثلَ ما * تـولّـتْ بـإقـبـال الحَنيـفـةِ فـارِسُ
ومهْما يكن فـالـدهُ ليس بزائلٍ * ويَجنى الفتى من بعدُ ما هو غارِسُ
أَرَى مَقِرًا فى آخر العيش كائنًا * نَسِيتَ لـه مـا أَطعمتْك الجَوارِسُ
فأَبعدْ من الصَّفْرآءِ واليومُ واقدٌ * وأَدْنِ من الشَّقْرآءِ والـلـيـلُ قارِسُ
أيـا قَيْلُ إنّ النار صالٍ بحَرّها * مُـقـيـمٌ صـلاةٍ والـمـهـنَّـدُ وارِسُ
وبـالرَّمْـلـة الشَّعْثآءِ شِيبٌ ووِلْدةٌ * أَصـابـهُـمُ مـمّـا جـنـيتَ الدَّهارِسُ

321. ٢ O مدية.

324. Z 31, 481.

( 326 )

عَلِّمـوهُـنَّ الـغَـزْلَ والنَّسْجَ والـرَّدْنَ وخَلُّوا كِـتـابـةً وقِرآءَهْ
فصَلاةُ الفَتاة بالحَمْدِ والإخـ*ـلاصِ تَجْزى عن يُونُسٍ وبَرآءَهْ
تَهْتِكُ السِّتْرَ بالجُلوس أَمامَ الـ*ـسِّتْرِ إن غَنَّت القِيانُ وَرآءَهْ

( 327 )

ولا تَحْمَد حِسانَك إن توافتْ * بأَيْدٍ للسُّطورِ مُقَوِّماتِ
فحَمْلُ مَغازل النِّسْوانِ أَوْلَى * بهنّ من اليَراعِ مَقَلَّماتِ
سِمامٌ إن عَرَفْنَ كتابَ لِسْنٍ * رَجَعْنَ بما يسوءُ مُسَمَّماتِ
ويَتركنَ اللبيبَ بغير لُبٍّ * أَتَيْنَ لهَدْيه مُتَعَلِّماتِ
٥ وإن جئنَ المنجّمَ سائلاتٍ * فلَسْنَ عن الضلال بمُنْجِماتِ
ليأخُذْنَ التِّلاوةَ عن عَجوزٍ * من اللائى فَغَرْنَ مُهَتَّماتِ
يُسَبِّحْنَ المليكَ بكلّ جُنْحٍ * ويَرْكَعْنَ الضُّحَى مُتَأَثِّماتِ
فما عَيْبٌ على الفَتَياتِ لَحْنٌ * اذا قُلْنَ المُرادَ مُتَرْجِماتِ

( 328 )

قد حاطت الزَّوْجَ حُرَّةٌ سألتْ * مليكَها العَوْنَ فى حِياطَتِها
غَدَتْ ببِرْسٍ الى مَرادِنها * او خَيْطِ غَزْلٍ الى خِياطَتِها
أَماطت السُّوءَ عن ضمائرها * فلاقت الخيرَ فى إماطَتِها

( 329 )

وصاغَنى اللهُ من مآءٍ وها أَنا ذا * كالمآءِ أَجْرى بقَدْرٍ كيف جُرِّيتُ
بُريتُ للأَمْرِ لم أَعْرِفْ حقائقَهُ * فلَيْتنى من حِساب اللهِ بُرِّيتُ
ارى خَيالَ إزارٍ حَمَّهُ قَدَرٌ * ظَهرتُ منه قليلًا ثمّ وُرِّيتُ

327. ٣ BCL سِهام. This reading, which I have followed in the translation, is inferior to that of O.

( 330 )

خُلِقْنا لشیءٍ غیر بادٍ وانّما * نعیشُ قلیلًا ثمّ یُدرکنا الهُلْكُ
كخَیْلِ صِیامٍ تأْلُكُ الدهرَ لُجْمَها * بغَیْظٍ فقد أَدْمَی نواجذَها الأَلْكُ

( 331 )

رضیتُ مُلاوةً فوعیتُ عِلْمًا * وأَحفظنی الزمانُ فقَلَّ حِفْظی
اذا ما قلتُ نَثْرًا او نظیمًا * تتبَّعَ سارِقو الأَلفاظِ لَفْظی

( 332 )

والناسُ من أَرْبَعٍ شَتَّی اذا ٱئْتَلفتْ * رُدَّتْ الی سبعةٍ فی الحُكم تَخْتَلِفُ
اِقْرأْ كلامی اذا ضَمَّ الثَّرَی جَسَدی * فانّهُ لك ممّن قالَهُ خَلَفُ

331. S 100.

# INDEX I

## NAMES AND TITLES

The definite article al-, which precedes many Arabic names, has usually been omitted both in the text and in the following Index; those names in which it has been retained will be found under their initial letter. Titles of books are printed in italics.


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